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THEOLOGICAL WORKS

OF THE LATE

REV. JOHN SKINNER,

EPISCOPAL CLERGYMAN IN LONGSIDE, ABERDEENSHIRE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED, A BIOGRAPHICAL

MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.

Δὶ αὐτῶν—¹ ἀπεθάνοντι λέλειται—

BY THESE—¹ HE BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH.—Heb. xi. 4.

VOL. II.

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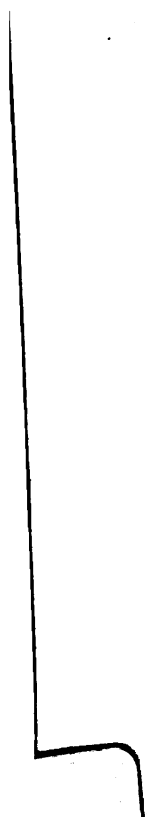
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DISSERTATION

ON THE

SHECHINAH, OR DIVINE PRESENCE

WITH THE

CHURCH OR PEOPLE OF GOD.

IN the *Sketch* of the author's *Life*, prefixed to these volumes, it has been mentioned, that during his imprisonment, in consequence of the acts passed against the nonjuring episcopal clergy of Scotland, he employed part of his time in studying the nature of that peculiar symbol of the Divine Presence, which is known to the biblical scholar, under the Hebrew title of the SHECHINAH. The direction of his thoughts to this interesting subject was no doubt suggested by a political measure, which in the summer of 1753 very strongly agitated the public mind. In the month of June, that year, the Roy-

al assent was given to an Act to ' permit persons professing the Jewish religion to be naturalized by ' Parliament ;' an act which raised such a clamour in the country, as induced the legislature to repeal it in the very next session of Parliament.— While it existed, however, the alarm produced by it will account for the fears expressed in the following Letter, addressed to a friend, upon this subject.

SIR,

IN our late conversation on various religious topics, you will remember it was observed, that the encouragements given, or supposed to be given, to the papists, in the reign of King James II. put the clergy on examining more narrowly the state of the popish controversy, and produced, in that short time, more publications in vindication and defence of the church of England, than had been seen in former reigns, or than have indeed appeared since. The press was occupied with little else but Answers and Replies, and Rejoinders; and the more that the popish missionaries fancied themselves in the good graces of the court, the more diligent were the established clergy in confuting their pretensions, and exposing to the eyes of the people the various corruptions and superstitions of their religious system. This was the happy effect of the apprehensions then entertained; and as in a great measure was good brought out of evil.

evil. The danger of falling into popery, thank God, is over, or at least it is not thought to be so great now as it was then. But, instead of *Papery*, the alarm on the present occasion runs against *Judaism*; and, from some public measures lately adopted, there seems to be good reason for putting people on their guard against not the perverters only, but against those avowed and desperate enemies of Christianity, who would wish to see it totally annihilated. It is not the purity of our religion only, but it is the very essence of it, for which we must now contend; and, if consequences turn out, as it is feared they will; if the late *naturalization* project shall draw over multitudes of *Jews* to Great Britain, there will be an absolute necessity for christians of all ranks and descriptions looking more carefully into the principles and foundations of their holy profession, than most of them at present are at the pains to do. It will, in that case, be proper to banish, at least for some time, that spirit of debate and division which prevails so much among us; and, it will be incumbent on all the denominations and classes of those who embrace the gospel, to unite together, and join with heart and hand in support of the common cause.

The Jews have a great deal to say for themselves, if we will be so careless as to say nothing against them; and, though there certainly be, in all essential points, a clear connection between

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The Jews have a great deal to say for themselves, if we will be so careless as to say nothing against them; and, though there certainly be, in all essential points, a clear connection between

the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ, yet so blinded are that people, and so prejudiced in favour of their own cause, that every argument, which has for its object the vindication of the Old Testament, they maliciously wrest and turn against the New. So that it will be found a duty imperiously demanded of us, if things go on as they are likely to do, to 'stand up,' in the literal sense, 'for the faith once delivered to the saints,' and to have ourselves armed with something to answer the calumnies, if not to stop the mouths of the inveterate adversaries of Jesus. It is true, all are not equally capable of retorting the Jewish objections against the christian religion: let such as *are not*, seek assistance, and listen to instruction from those *that are*. And let all those, to whom God hath given time and talents for making the necessary inquiries, employ those talents, and at least some small portion of that time, in such a useful and truly christian work. So shall we become impregnable against all the assaults and batteries of our foes; and the more that we see our faith attacked, the more precious will it appear; and we shall find it well worth our while to 'hold it fast without wavering, because faithful is he that hath promised.' It is purely from a motive of this nature, and out of a due regard for the general and universally received principles of christianity, strengthened, too, by the obligations which I
 feel

feel myself under to comply, as far as I can, with any desire from so good a friend, that I have taken upon me to present you with a few thoughts relative to this subject; which, however new they may perhaps be imagined by some, yet if they shall be found consonant to sacred scripture, as I trust they are, and no way derogatory to the glory of God, and the honour of our religion, I shall entirely refer to your judgement, either to publish or suppress them: only begging, that whether they shall be approved or not, (as I merely propose to collect into one view what has been severally advanced by others), my design may be excused and accepted of, as a cheerful, though small contribution in defence of our common faith, and as a means to stir up others of more extensive abilities, either to correct, or enlarge upon, the little that I shall now offer in the annexed

DISSERTATION

ON

THE SHECHINAH.

THE grand scruple (not to mention others of less note) which the Jews have always had, and still continue to have, against the gospel, is the mean appearance of the person whom we call the Author of it, and the *low, seemingly despicable manner*

manner of its first promulgation. In opposition to this, and in evident contempt of it, they boast of the pompous and *really glorious* delivery of their law upon Mount Sinai, and the many splendid exhibitions and heavenly appearances with which the worship both of their tabernacle and temple was blessed. Is it to be thought, say they, or will it be believed, that God would withdraw his countenance from, and allow the abolition of, such a stupendous and supernatural establishment, in favour of a religious system which, at its first introduction, was destitute of all these truly solemn and captivating appendages? So natural is it for mankind, for Jews as well as christians, to be fond of external pomp and grandeur, even in religious matters, and to think but little of a church or religion, that has not something of that kind to adorn and set it off. Against this objection of the Jews much has been already advanced. With great truth has it been observed, that there is no intrinsic necessity for those things; that 'God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him 'in spirit and in truth;' that the kingdom of Christ is to be set up in the hearts of men, and stands in no need of pompous or terrific modes of support; that 'we walk by faith, not by sight;' and that Christ Jesus, the Messiah, will come again with *greater glory* than has ever yet been seen upon earth, to manifest his divinity, and to judge the world. It has also been proved, that the prophets
of

of Israel have not only foretold the coming of the Messiah, but have even clearly pointed out the person who was to bear that character. One of them has prophesied, that *Shiloh*, the Messiah, should not come till the sceptre should depart from Judah, and a lawgiver from between his feet : another has spoken of the place of his birth, that it should be in Bethlehem, in the land of Judah : a third goes farther, and tells us that his mother should be a virgin ; and the prophet Daniel limits the time of his appearance to be seventy weeks, or 490 years, according to the prophetic style, from such a period as the prophet at that time had in his eye. These are all clear descriptions, and have all centered in the person of *Jesus of Nazareth* ; so exactly indeed, that they were never yet applied to any other ; and, according to the tenor of the prophecies, cannot now be fulfilled in any other person.

After such strong and undeniable proofs in favour of christianity, one should think the mouths of its adversaries would be stopped ; and if they would not, nor could not, be persuaded to believe it themselves, that at least they would be ashamed to find fault with those that do believe it. Yet they have still the old cavil at hand ; and, until they hear that the gospel was ushered in with some *shew of outward glory and majesty*, they will still think themselves at liberty to give the law

law of Moses the preference. The peculiar solemnities of their temple-worship never cease to occupy their thoughts : and, although they be deprived of, and debarred from, such a solemn worship at present, (as their nation has been for more than 1700 years, through the just judgement of God), yet they still look for a restoration of these privileges, and have hopes that the Messiah, when he comes, will rebuild Jerusalem, and re-establish the temple in as great state and splendour as ever. There is indeed but little prospect of beating this foolish conceit out of their heads : all that I expect or propose, is to build up and confirm christians in their most holy faith ; and I trust, through God's assistance, this expectation will be answered, when it is made to appear, that all the great and desireable things in the Jewish worship, of which they are so fond, and with the want of which they are so ready to upbraid our religion, are still in *substance* continued under the gospel ; at least *were continued*, some of them even in a visible way, when the dispensation of the gospel first took place.

It is certain that the Jewish sacrifices, both of thanksgiving and propitiation, were all accomplished, when Jesus Christ offered up himself to bear the sins of mankind, while their sacraments of circumcision and the passover, which were signs and seals of God's everlasting covenant, are now spiritualized to the same intent, under the christian sacraments of baptism

baptism and the Lord's supper. This has been, beyond all possibility of contradiction, evinced by that noble champion of christianity, St Paul, as in many places of his writings, so more particularly and of set purpose in his epistle to the Hebrews, which, for that reason, and to give christians a just notion of their religion, and of its mysterious excellency, should be carefully read and attended to. Out of the same apostle's writings, supported by the declarations to be found at large in the New Testament, it can be shewn, that even the ornaments and decorations, as they are called, of Solomon's temple, which, by the Jews' own confession, were wanting in their second temple, not only were types of the Messiah, but were even to be found in the person of Jesus Christ; and that too, while he was upon earth, in his seemingly low estate, or some other way dispensed or disposed of by him. Of these the Jewish Rabbins themselves number up four or five, which contributed much to the glory of Solomon's temple; but were not to be met with, when the temple was rebuilt after the seventy years' captivity.

I. One was the *pot of manna*, which Moses ordered* to be laid up before the Lord for a memorial, and which they acknowledge was lost when the first temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. This manna, the bread which the Lord gave the

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* Exod. xvi. 33.

children of Israel to eat¹, or as St Paul calls it², 'that spiritual meat which they did all eat,' was not only, I say, a type of Christ, but Christ himself tells us, that He is that very bread, the bread of life³, 'the bread which came down from heaven⁴;' 'the living bread, of which, if a man eat, 'he shall live for ever⁵;' and not only so, but he assures us, that this bread is his flesh, which he was to give for the life of the world: and 'he gives us this express declaration, ushered in with a 'verily, 'verily, I say unto you, that except ye eat the 'flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye 'have no life in you.' This, then, is our manna, even a sensible manna; and accompanied to us with such an invisible power and life, that if we eat of it, we shall not die, as the Jews did, who ate of manna in the wilderness, but shall live for ever. Hence it is called the manna which Christ promises⁶ to 'give to him that overcometh;' and, as many of the primitive Fathers understand the term, this is that supersubstantial bread (we call it *daily*—ἐπιτοκή) which our Lord teaches us to pray for⁷. And by eating of this 'hidden manna,' this 'bread of life,' this 'spiritual meat,' this 'flesh of 'the Son of Man,' in faith and holiness, we are strengthened for our christian warfare in the wilderness

¹ Exod. xvi. 15.² 1 Cor. x. 3.³ St John vi. 35.⁴ v. 41.⁵ v. 51—58.⁶ v. 53.⁷ Rev. ii. 17.⁸ St Matt. vi. 14.

derness of this world; we are united to God, and made fellow-citizens with the saints. Without this, our worldly food would signify little or nothing; for it is not by bread alone that man lives'. Our eating this worldly bread, without partaking of the sacramental bread of God, is expressed in the strong figurative language of scripture, as no better than 'eating ashes, feeding ourselves with wind, 'with wormwood, with the bread of tears, with 'husks that swine do eat; yea, feeding and fattening ourselves against the day of slaughter, that 'death and corruption may feed upon us.' Since then we have the advantage, the blessing of this heavenly bread, to be not only an ornament to our worship, but likewise to be the nourishment of our souls, is it any loss to us, or to the true worshippers of God, that we have not the monumental '*pot of manna*' to boast of, when we have what is much better among us, the food, the precious food, of which the Jewish manna was but a figure, and that pot only a shadow or type? And in this interpretation we are warranted by our Saviour himself, who makes this return to the Jews of his day, when they boasted that their 'fathers did eat 'manna in the wilderness,' and desired to see some such remarkable sign from Him, 'Moses gave you 'not that bread from heaven, but my Father,' says he, 'giveth you the true bread from heaven, for the 'bread of God is He, which cometh down from
c 2 ' heaven,

1 Deut. viii. 3. St Matth. iv. 4.

‘heaven, and giveth life unto the world’; substituting himself in room of that manna, and thereby giving us the thing signified, instead of the sign, the eucharistic bread of the sacrament, instead of the Jewish manna in the wilderness.

II. Another of the ornaments of the Jewish œconomy was ‘*Aaron’s rod*,’ which blossomed, and in which they glory, as being a sign or emblem of the divine approbation to the Aaronic priesthood. But, whoever will read the 6th and 7th chapters of the epistle to the Hebrews, will find this plea abundantly discussed, and the christian priesthood demonstrated to be of more excellency than the Aaronic, in as far as Christ, from whom the priests of the gospel derive the dignity of their succession, was made an ‘High priest after the order of Melchisedec’; and, consequently, as St Paul argues¹, ‘by so much was Jesus made a surety of a better Testament.’

III. The same is to be said of the ‘*ark of the covenant*,’ which was a third article of the sacred furniture of the holy of holies, and for which there is now no farther use under the christian œconomy; as now we are under the new dispensation, of which the prophet Jeremiah so fully prophesies², and which, according to the divine purpose, St Paul

¹ St John vi. 31, 32, 33.

² Psal. cx. 4. Heb. vi. 20. vii. 17—21.

³ Heb. vii. 22.

⁴ ch. xxxi. 31—34.

Paul¹ applies to the happiness of the gospel æra ; and at the same time observes, that the former covenant or dispensation, of which the ark spoken of was a memorial, was, on Christ's appearance, become old; and ready to vanish away.

IV. The '*Urim and Thummim*' calls alike for our notice, as it seems to have been a peculiar privilege of the Aaronic priesthood, by which the high priest was enabled to foretel future events, and to direct and advise such as consulted him, in difficult and important cases. And in such estimation was this privilege among the latter Jews, that, when it was removed, and no more to be had under the second temple, their doctors tell us, that the want of it was in some measure supplied by the *voicé* from heaven, which they call *Bathcol* ; and which gave rise to those strange consultations, and astrological enquiries, by *Sortes* and such like methods, to be found in some of the old christian histories. What the '*Urim and Thummim*' itself was, or how the high priest behaved at the delivery of these *responses*, has been variously conjectured by various writers ; some explaining it one way, and some another ; though it is feared none of them have hit on the true explication, nor is such an explication now to be expected. However, the use of the '*Urim and Thummim*' is to us sufficiently secured under the gospel, as far as is necessary

¹ Heb. viii. 7—13.

sary for furthering the ends of religion ; and to such a degree as may well silence the Jews for finding fault with the gospel for such a defect. The prophet Joel long since foretold¹, That ' in ' those days the Lord would pour out his spirit' (the *Urim and Thummim* of old times) ' on all ' flesh, and their sons and their daughters should ' prophesy.' And this prediction, the apostle St Peter, in presence of many men of Judea, and of all those that dwelt at Jerusalem², proves beyond contradiction to have been literally verified and fulfilled by that miraculous event of the descent of the Holy Ghost, at the feast of Pentecost, which was designed to be a guide and assistant to the christian priests in those days, as the *Urim and Thummim* was to the Jewish priests before. This gift of the Holy Spirit is continued with the successors of the apostles in the government of the christian church to this day, although not in such an eminent measure as was given at that time, yet in such a measure as is useful for preserving the church, and warranting all its other *spiritual* administrations.

Thus from the first writers in defence of christianity, we can adduce arguments to shew, that under the gospel we have the *pot of manna*, the *rod of Aaron*, the *ark of the covenant*, and the *Urim and Thummim*, realized in such a way, that the very
pri-

¹ Ch. ii. 28.

² Acts ii. 14.

privileges themselves are given to the christian church, and continued with it, which were only typified and set forth by those symbols under the church of the Jews.

There remains, however, one article to be taken notice of, which constituted, indeed, the *principal splendour* of the Jewish tabernacle ; and that article is the divine *Presence* or *Glory*, above the mercy-seat, between the cherubim, which the Jews, by a particular title, term the SHECHINAH, and which St Paul¹ calls the '*cherubim of glory*.' Of this, therefore, which was not only the honour of the Mosaic œconomy, but at the same time the chief foundation-stone of the more glorious fabric of christianity, it is chiefly my intention at present to treat ; so that, if it can be made to appear from scripture, that this *Shechinah* was still visible, while Christ our Messiah was upon earth ; in other words, that *Christ himself was this Shechinah*, it may be of use, if not to convert or convince any of the apostate Jews, yet to instruct and satisfy christian believers in the divine origin of their most noble and excellent faith.

In order that I may be enabled to throw a somewhat clearer light on a point of such infinite importance, and which has hitherto been but slightly discussed by theological writers, I hope I shall be excused

¹ Heb. ix. 5.

excused if I go back to the original of things ; and even introduce some observations, which, tho' at first sight they may appear foreign to my subject, will yet, upon a little closer attention, be found both necessary and intimately connected with it. In the course of these observations, if there shall be any thing advanced which may give offence to a certain fastidious class of readers, as no doubt may happen, I have only to plead that no offence was meant ; assuring them, that if they really wish for conviction in a discussion so important, they have only to take the original language of scripture for their guide ; where, by comparing spiritual things with spiritual, they may rest assured of deriving profit as well as pleasure, so far as profit may arise from sound and salutary instruction.

In endeavouring to shew, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was and is the *Shechinah*, or *divine glory*, exhibited between the cherubim, the reader must bear with me patiently, while I go back to the first institution of these cherubim, and see whether the holy scriptures afford us any light in the discovery of what they were. But, as the first account which we have of this cherubic exhibition is immediately upon the expulsion of man out of Paradise ; the history and nature of this *delectable garden* will not improperly become the object of our first enquiry.

After having fully described the creation or formation

mation of man, the sacred historian proceeds to inform us¹, that 'the Lord God planted a garden 'in Eden eastward.' This description would seem to imply that it was some extraordinary place, from the particular account of its original, and of God's bestowing, as it were, more pains upon it than even upon the formation of the light itself; which, if we may venture so to speak, cost him but a single word. Hence in scripture we sometimes find it alluded to as denoting pleasantness and delight², and described in a peculiar manner as the garden of Jehovah; an expression, which implies that it had some eminent relation to Jehovah, and was a place properly *sacred* to God. Thus we say, the *Lord's house*, the *Lord's day*, and the like; to signify, that although all houses, all days, &c. be³ by right of property the *Lord's*, yet some there are, which being consecrated, dedicated, set apart to *Him* and his *worship*, do thereby become *his* in a more eminent and distinguished manner. And so here, this garden, this paradise, must have been, above the rest of the earth, a consecrated place, serving the purpose of a tabernacle or temple, designed and set apart for worshipping the *Jehovah Aleim*, 'the Lord God.' Into this garden did the Lord God put man³, as into a sacred grove, to employ his mind in divine meditations, to feed and

VOL. II. D delight

¹ Gen. ii. 8.

² Gen. xiii. 10. Isaiah li. 3. Ezek. xxviii. 13.

³ Gen. ii. 8, 15.

delight his soul with spiritual knowledge, 'to dress 'it and keep it,' says our English translation; but according to the meaning of the original Hebrew, more properly to *worship*, be a religious disciple, serve God and keep his covenant, in it.

In this sacred inclosure, grove, or tabernacle, Jehovah set up and instituted emblems of his own presence, and symbols of spiritual blessings, to comfort man's heart, and direct him to the true fountain of all comfort and knowledge. Of this sort, and to this purpose, was the river so particularly described and alluded to in many places of holy writ, especially in the book of Psalms ²—'There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. Again ³, 'Bless ye God in the congregations, the Lord from the fountain of Israel.' And still more particularly ⁴, 'Thou shalt make them drink of' (originally *תַּשְׁקֵם* *tashkem*, 'thou shalt water them with') 'the river of thy pleasures,' literally of thy *Eden*, 'for with thee is the fountain of life.' To this river of paradise the Jewish prophet Ezekiel had a clear retrospect, in his vision of the *holy waters* ⁵; and our christian prophet St John had also a similar typical vision ⁶—'And he shewed me a pure river of water of

¹ Gen. ii. 10—14.

² Psal. xli. 4.

³ Psal. lxxviii. 26.

⁴ Psal. xxxvi. 8, 9.

⁵ Ezek. xlviii. 1—13.

⁶ Revel. xxii. 1.

‘ of life, proceeding out of the throne of God.’ And, that this paradisaical river was an emblem of spiritual blessings, is evident from several passages in scripture, where such blessings are denoted or held forth under the type of *water*, as ‘ With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.’ ‘ Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.’ ‘ My people have forsaken me the fountain of living waters,’ &c. ‘ He that believeth on me,’ as the scripture hath said², out of his belly shall flow rivers of *living waters*; but ‘ this spake he of the spirit,’ &c. and ‘ The water, that I shall give, shall be in him a *well of water* springing up to everlasting life.’ And from this original use of water, according to its institution in Paradise, it is, that water, both in the Jewish times, and more *signally* under the gospel, became the symbol of washing or purification, and was chosen by our blessed Lord to be the element of the christian sacrament of baptism, by which we are spiritually washed, purified, and regenerated. Very probably too, the primitive Jews had a view to this ‘symbolical signification of water, when in their eucharistical cup, or cup of blessing, after eating the passover, they not only had a *custom*,

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but

¹ Isaiah xii. 8.

² Isaiah lv. 1.

³ Jerem. ii. 13.

⁴ St John vii. 38.

⁵ The scripture here referred to was believed by the author to be Cant. iv. 14, 15. and that Christ thus bore witness to the holy Song of Solomon, the reconciler.—EDITOR.

⁶ St John iv. 14.

but even made it a *canon* or rule, to mix that cup with *water*. And as we have no reason to doubt, but our Saviour made use of such a cup, at the institution of the other sacrament of the christian church, which we term the Eucharist, or Lord's Supper ; so there is all the ground in the world to believe, that his apostles and their more immediate successors continued the same rite with the same view. Any objection, therefore, which may be now started against this *emblematical* mixture, founded as it undoubtedly is in scripture usage, can only proceed either from ignorance of the design of the *paradisaical water*, as alluded to and made use of to express and typify the blessings of cleansing, refreshing, &c. in one continued chain of connection from the 2d chapter of Genesis to the 22d of the Revelation, or from a reprehensible inattention to that design.

Besides this river in Paradise, we read too of a plantation of trees' — ' Every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food ;' which last expression is to be taken in a sacramental sense for the food of the soul, as we find that man had been otherwise supplied with *bodily* food before. ² ' I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of the earth ; and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed, *to you it shall be for meat.*' This grant, according to the order

¹ Gen. ii. 9. . .

² Gen. i. 29.

order of narration, was made before Paradise was planted ; which was not done until after the sabbath was sanctified ; and, by the grant here referred to, trees and their fruit, as distinct from the *trees of Paradise*, are particularly set apart for the food of man ; for which reason these last seem to have been *given* for a *typical*, as the trees of the earth had been before given for a *natural*, end. What these paraisaical trees were, or by what names they were all distinguished, we cannot know. Whether that character given to the *cedar*, ‘ ‘ The cedars of ‘ God,’ (not as our translation has it, ‘ the *goodly cedars*), will bear so much as that there were *cedars* in *Paradise*, I shall not positively say : But of *two* of these paraisaical trees we have the particular names left on record ; the one distinguished as the tree of *knowledge of good and evil*, which, by the dismal consequences that followed on eating of it, was an emblem of *mortality*, and of the danger of departing from the ways and means of God’s appointment, to seek knowledge, however desirable in itself, by means of men’s own devising. That there must have been some innate noxious quality in that tree, which so soon perverted man’s faculties, and destroyed his innocence, is the opinion of some ; while others are inclined to believe, that this tree was designed to promote the completion, or highest extent of man’s knowledge on earth ; and that he would have been allowed, nay called upon, to eat
of

of it *immediately* before his removal into the beatific vision in heaven; and consequently, that the heinousness of his crime consisted in eating of it too ~~soon~~, contrary to the commandment of God, and to the original design of that emblem.

But which ever of these two opinions, as to this tree of knowledge, is most worthy of regard, (for I own this last is objected to, and perhaps not without reason), certain it is, that we have more full indications of the nature and design of the other tree, called the *tree of life*, the symbol or sacrament of immortality; and consequently emblematical of Christ, who, in some places of scripture, particularly in the writings of the inspired Solomon, is even designated and set forth by this very title. Thus in his book of Proverbs, among other characters of *wisdom*, by which we are to understand Christ, according to what St Paul says of him¹, that ‘He is made of God unto us *wisdom* and *righteousness*, and *sanctification*, and *redemption*;’ it is said², ‘She is a *tree of life* to them that lay hold on her.’ Again³, the ‘fruit of the *righteous*’ (a name of Christ) ‘is a *tree of life*.’⁴ ‘Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, but when the *desire* cometh,’ (‘the *desire* of all nations shall come), ‘it is a *tree of life*.’ St John, referring as it were to Ezekiel’s

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¹ 1 Cor. i. 30.

² Prov. iii. 18.

³ Ch. xi. 30.

⁴ ch. xiii. 12.

⁵ Haggai ii. 7.

vision', writes thus, 'In the midst of the street of
'it, and on every side of the river was the tree of
'life;' the same tree of life, of which if our first par-
rents had eaten in Paradise¹, they should 'have
'lived for ever,' and of which Jesus Christ promises
to give him that overcometh a right to eat².

This river, then, and the tree of life were two
principal emblems or symbols of the divine presence,
two chief parts of the sacred furniture of the para-
disical tabernacle, into which man was entered
for the purposes already mentioned, and of which
Adam, the first man, was constituted the high priest.
How long our first parents remained in this state
of innocence, cannot be exactly determined. Some
have said, that they fell the same day in which
they were created; which in my opinion seems di-
rectly contrary to the tenor of scripture history.
Others have extended their abode in Paradise
to the *third day*; for which conceit I know of no
foundation, unless it be that the account of the fall
is to be found in the *third* chapter of Genesis. If
we would attend to the *several* particulars recorded
by the Spirit of God, such as Adam's considering,
and giving significant names to all the beasts, the
manner of our first parents' confession before God,
and plain acknowledgement of their fault, without
pretending either ignorance or shortness of warn-
ing

¹ Ch. xlvii. 12. Revel. xxii. 2.

² Gen. iii. 22.

³ Rev. ii. 7. xxii. 14.

ing for their excuse, which they would have probably done, had their temptation and fall so soon followed their creation, we might suppose that their stay in paradise was of longer duration than is commonly imagined¹. But waving this, it will be more instructive, as well as more pertinent to the present purpose, to enquire into the nature of their employment, and how they spent their time, whether long or short, in Paradise.

That their general employment was to *contemplate* the works of God, to study not only the several parts of creation, but likewise the *sacred symbols* of religion, and to perform certain instituted acts of worship and adoration to Jehovah Aleim, the Lord God, is what I presume will not, because it cannot, be denied. For this purpose a *set time* was appointed, to be more especially occupied in devotional services: The *Sabbath*, or seventh day was *blessed* and sanctified, that is, set apart and consecrated to some peculiar sacred work

¹ Among other arguments against the shortness of Adam's stay in Paradise, there are two adduced by a Mr Whaley, in a letter to Archbishop Usher. 1. There being no mention made of Adam's knowing his wife till after the fall, and if he could abstain from that for two or three days, why not for two or three years; as in a state of innocence, he was free from that concupiscence, to which men are now subject. 2. At the birth of his third son, Seth, Adam is said (Gen. v. 3.) to have been 130 years old; by which it seems either that other descendants of his are omitted, or that the distance of time betwixt Eve's births was very long, none of which is so probable, as that their stay in paradise, before Eve's beginning to bear, made a considerable part these 130 years.

work, as the terms *bless* and *sanctify* usually imply. And to this first original *consecration* in Paradise, or perhaps before Paradise, God seems to point at the delivery of the fourth commandment from Mount Sinai, where the expression, ‘Remember the Sabbath-day,’ implies a previous knowledge and observance of such a day; as we may be naturally called to *remember*, not a new or a strange thing, but something which we had known or heard of before. And, if our first parents were for *one* or more Sabbaths in Paradise, (as, notwithstanding all that has been alleged to the contrary, they may be thought to have been), it is not to be doubted but on that holy day they would more particularly pay their tribute of devotion and worship to God. What the several parts of this worship were, or what particular *acts* they performed, the scripture does not expressly affirm. It may however be presumed, that a particular place was appointed for that purpose; and that it was towards the *tree of life* that our first parents directed their worship. It is said that, after their eyes were opened upon eating the forbidden fruit, ‘they hid themselves from the presence of the Lord.’ Can we however imagine, that they were so sunk in unbelief, as to expect to conceal themselves from God? *They* who, having so lately witnessed his wonderful power in the creation, could not but know and feel the universal penetration of his all-seeing eye. ! The psalmist

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long

long after could say ' Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or ' Whither shall I flee from thy presence ? ' No-whither, to be sure ; nor did our first parents so soon lose their acquaintance with the divine nature, as to believe that any place could screen or hide them from God. The *presence* of the Lord, here spoken of, is to be understood of some *special* particular place, in which, though the Lord was present everywhere, he vouchsafed to display or manifest himself more eminently ; the *presence-chamber*, as we would say, of the Most High ; the holy of holies in Paradise ; the peculiar place, where *communion* was to be had with God, to which Adam had been wont to resort for the more *solemn* and *intimate* acts of worship. And that this *divine presence* was exhibited under or near to the tree of life, may be inferred from what is said ^a of our first parents hiding themselves ' from the presence of ' the Lord, in the midst of the tree of the garden.' We are apt to misconstrue this passage, by inverting the order of the words, and by this means are led to think, that it was ' among the trees of the garden,' that Adam hid himself from God : whereas both the Hebrew text, and Septuagint translation have it, ' in the *midst* of the *tree* of the garden,' (not *trees* in the plural number) ; and by this addition, which forms part of the description of the *tree* of life ³, and which is both most *naturally* and most

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¹ Psal. lxxxix. 7.

² Gen. iii. 8.

³ ' The tree of life also in the midst of the garden.'—Gen. ii. 9. as it is also called Rev. ii. 7. and xxii. 2.

reasonably connected with the *presence* of the Lord, (not with Adam's hiding himself), we have ground to conclude, that the *tree* of life was what we might call the *altar* of the *tabernacle* of *Paradise*, where the *presence* of the Lord (the face or faces, פנים in Hebrew, προσωπον in Greek, of Jehovah) was to be seen : while Adam's going off from this *presence* was a kind of self-excommunication, or, as we say, a taking guilt to himself; and that so feelingly, as not to dare to approach that sacred place, where he had been formerly blessed with divine communion; like the publican in our Saviour's parable¹, who, 'standing afar off, would not lift up so much as 'his eyes unto heaven.'

From all these things put together, it appears that *Paradise* was the temple of God, that the river and trees in it had a symbolical signification; and, that particularly the *tree of life* was a peculiar emblem of the divine presence : and consequently Adam's employment in it was of a sacred nature, to perform acts of worship, in its several parts, to the Jehovah Aleim; and not to spend his time while there, in manual labour : since it is plainly told, that bodily labour was a part of the sentence or curse pronounced after the fall². So that upon the whole, it will be allowed that the scripture, tho' short and concise in its narration, has yet told us enough to give us some dark idea, at least, of the

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nature

¹ St Luke xviii. 13.² Gen. iii. 19. 23.

nature and constitution of Paradise ; that it was something more than merely a garden, however delicious and pleasant ; an opinion which, though received by too many christians, may truly be said to have given birth to all those gross notions and carnal descriptions, entertained by Mahometans and others, with regard to their Paradise after death ; where they are to be regaled with the finest of fruits and flowers, shady arbours, delightful walks, singing of birds, and the like, exactly similar to what Adam is supposed to have enjoyed in his Paradise,

Not less foolish, or even presumptuous, is the attempt to fix the limits or extent of Paradise, and to seek for it on the surface of this present earthly globe ; some placing it in Arabia, some in Mesopotamia, some in one latitude, some in another ; altho' all the while, if it should be said, that God dissolved it after the fall, as there was then no further use for it, according to the ends of its original institution ; and that it has no longer any existence, as it had in Adam's time ; such a conjecture, I believe, would come as near the truth, and might even be supported by as strong arguments as those persons can adduce, who rack their brains and stretch their invention to the utmost, to tell us where, or how large it was. Nay, were we even to affirm, that it still continues, as at first planted, disjoined from the rest of the earth, and destined to be the receptacle of the souls of the blessed, till their re-union with

with their bodies, such a notion cannot, I presume, be contradicted from scripture-testimonies, or rejected as being either heretical or superstitious. But leaving this to form subject of inquiry for others who may think it worth their while, I shall return, whence I digressed, to the expulsion of Adam, for his disobedience, out of this paradisaical tabernacle, this sacred grove, which was done in a solemn manner, and attended with circumstances that call for, and well deserve, our most serious attention—‘ So he drove out the man, and he placed, at the east of the garden of Eden, CHERUBIM¹, &c.

This at last brings me to the principal point in hand, as it is the first time that any mention is made of this mysterious and hieroglyphical representation, *the cherubim*. Whether this cherubic exhibition had been set up by God, and seen by Adam in Paradise, is not expressly said; tho', from the manner of the historian's relation of its being set up afterwards, this might perhaps be inferred. The Hebrew is, *ישכן את הכרובים*, *Jashachen ath Echerbim*, which the Septuagint have rendered, with the article, *εταξε τα χερουβιμ*, *etaxe ta cherubim*, *he set up THE cherubim*. Those, who are acquainted with the idiom of both Hebrew and Greek, will perceive the force and emphasis of the Hebrew article *אֶת־הַ*, *ath, he*, and its correspondent Greek *το*, which in English we call

¹ Gen. iii. 24.

call *the*. It may, therefore, be matter of criticism, whether such a mode of expression may not imply, that the cherubim had been set up in paradise, and that the mention made of it in this place was only a *removal* of it out of Paradise, into which man durst no longer enter, to be set up in another place, whither he might approach for the purpose of worship. Objections, I know, will be made against this interpretation, as there will be against any interpretation, which depends on the idiom of language; though I make no doubt but this is one which might be sufficiently defended, if there were absolute necessity for it¹. Without however insisting much upon this, it will abundantly answer the present purpose to follow up the several accounts, which the scripture gives us of *the cherubim*, in order to discover what this exhibition was, and for what end it was set up or instituted.

After

¹ In order to prove that the cherubim were not in Paradise, it is observed, that they contained a revelation of the scheme of redemption, and were the figure of the persons in *Jehovah* regarding the blood of *the great sacrifice*. But I do not see how this observation militates against their paradisaical institution. For, it is certain, God had by his threatening, (Gen. ii. 17.), raised in man's mind an idea both of sin and death; and if Adam was thereby put in fear of death, as is evident, from Eve's communing with the serpent, (Gen. iii. 3.) both Adam and she were, then it is not to be doubted but some emblem of comfort, some symbolical representation of deliverance, would be set up for them too. And I still think, that the setting up the cherubim without Paradise after the fall, to this purpose, seems even to say that it was in Paradise before.

After the expulsion of Adam from Eden, we hear nothing further of *cherubim*, till we meet with them as a part, and indeed an essential part of the furniture of the Jewish tabernacle. With respect to which, we find their institution thus recorded¹: ‘Thou shalt make *two cherubim* of gold, in the two ‘ends of the mercy-seat.’ ‘And the *cherubim* shall ‘stretch forth their wings on high, covering the ‘mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces one ‘to another, toward the mercy-seat shall the *cherubim* be.’ ‘And there I will meet with thee, and ‘I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the *two cherubim*’, &c. Thus they continued all the time of the tabernacle-worship; and when, by God’s command, Solomon built a temple for *divine* worship, the *cherubim* were set up in the temple also; of which we have a full account in the first book of Kings². Yet at neither of these times is it mentioned what the *cherubim* were, or what those *faces*, spoken of in Exodus, were. Nor would it have been possible for interpreters or commentators to resolve this question, had not the spirit of God, by the mouth of the prophet Ezekiel, taken them by the hand and led the way.

In the first chapter of Ezekiel’s prophecies, we
have

¹ Exod. xxv. 18. 20. 22.

² Compare with this order the formation of the cherubim, as we have it, Exod. xxxviii. 7, 8, 9.

³ 1 Kings vi. 23—29.

have a most ample description of this divine exhibition. ‘ ‘ Out of the midst of the fire the likeness ‘ of four living creatures, and this was their appearance : They had the likeness of a man,’ (according to the Hebrew, *of Adam*), ‘ and every one had four ‘ faces, and every one had four *wings*.’ ² ‘ As for the ‘ likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a ‘ man,’ (of Adam), ‘ and the face of a lion on the ‘ right side ; and they four had the face of an ox ‘ on the left side ; they four also had the face of ‘ an eagle : thus were their faces.’ ³ ‘ And above the firmament, that was over their heads, ‘ was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance ‘ of sapphire stone ; and upon the likeness of the ‘ throne, was the likeness, as the appearance of a ‘ man (Adam) above upon it,’ &c. The same vision was again exhibited to the prophet, as we read in two of his subsequent chapters ⁴ : all which call for our utmost attention and consideration ; and are to be compared with what St John saw ⁵— ‘ In the midst of the throne, and round about the ‘ throne were four beasts,’ or, as the word signifies, *living creatures*, ‘ full of eyes before and behind. ‘ And the first beast was like a lion, and the second ‘ beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face ‘ as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying ‘ eagle,’ &c.

From

¹ v. 5.

² v. 10.

³ v. 26.

⁴ ch. x. and xliii.

⁵ Rev. iv. 6, &c.

From all this put together, we can now form an idea of the *cherubim*; and that it was, by universal acknowledgement, first set up to the east of Paradise; again in the Mosaic tabernacle; and lastly in the temple of Solomon, to be a representation of the *Trinity*, the *Jehovah Aleim*, and of the mysterious œconomy of man's redemption, by the incarnation of one of these divine persons¹. But why the appearance of living creatures, and their faces, were by appointment chosen for this purpose, tho' by referring all to the divine will and wisdom this difficulty might be easily removed, yet it is possible to assign some reasons, which, if not absolutely satisfactory, will yet appear plausible and just. As the goodness of God, in compassion to poor fallen and self-convicted man, had condescended to make a gracious promise of recovery and redemption, and that, too, to be effected by one of their own likeness and posterity, assuring them, that 'the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head'²; so in order to keep them in mind of this, and to afford consolation to their dejected spirits, it was determined to make a manifestation of this won-

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¹ Upon this subject it is observed by the learned President Forbes, in his 'Christianity near as old as the Creation,' p. 78.. that the form of the cherubim was so well known in the days of Moses, that without any other description of them but the name, and the matter of which they were to be, the workman Bezaleel made them; whereas the rest of the sacred furniture being new, and of a present institution, was particularly described, and, as it were, measured out to the workmen.

² Gen. iii. 15.

derful and abstruse dispensation, by some proper symbols or emblems; since *writing*, or the conveyance of knowledge and remembrance by letters, was not yet begun. But as *God*, the Lord, could not be *personally* seen by man, these symbols of manifestation could be taken only from some part or parts of the *visible creation*. Angels in their own spiritual nature could not be seen; and if any figures, by which to represent them, had been set up, that would have shewn them as parties to the eternal covenant, which was impossible. The figures of men could not be used, because one of them was to be a party, and therefore to be really exhibited. But the Bull, the chief of the tame kind; the Lion, the chief of the wild; and the Eagle, the chief of the winged kind—were set up separately, without confusion, to represent the separate and *distinct* existence of the three divine Persons in Jehovah; and at the same time *united* and *joined* together, to shew the unity or sameness of the undivided Godhead; and the face of the *man*, joined with the face of the *lion*, in Ezekiel's description, to exhibit the *assumption* of the *humanity* or human form into the *divinity*, by one of the Three, the *word* (the *lion* of the tribe of Judah¹) becoming flesh. Nay, their title of *cherubim* is evidently derived from the Hebrew word כרוב, *rub*, which is the highest epithet that language affords, and signifies *great*, in power, in strength, and in every possible per-

¹ Rev. v. 5.

perfection; so **כַּרְבֻּב**, cherub, signifies, *like a great one*, &c. This is the substance of what Mr Hutchinson¹, with a great deal of learning and judgment, has said upon this subject; although, indeed, as he himself foresaw, there is little doubt but it will be found fault with, by some who have no relish for such discoveries.

In general it will be allowed, that the cherubim of the tabernacle and of the temple were, by God's order, set up to be an oracle, or sacred *adytum*, towards which the priest was to present the *prayers* of the people, and from which God was to accept their petitions, and give his answers, according to his own gracious promise²; and as Solomon in his dedication prayer observed³, 'that thine eyes may be open towards this house (the temple) night and day, toward the place, of which thou hast said, my name shall be there, that thou mayest hearken to the prayer which thy servant shall make towards this place.' We find too, that over the mercy-seat, between the cherubic faces, there was an appearance, a *glorious appearance*, as of a *man*; and this appearance is what the Jews call the SHECHINAH. As this was the construction of the tabernacle and temple cherubim, it will not be denied, but the cherubim to the east of Eden were the same; and set up for the same intent, to be the place toward

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which

¹ See an account of Mr Hutchinson, in the Sketch of Mr Skinner's Life,

² Exod. xxv. 22.

³ 1 Kings viii. 29.

which prayer was to be made, and worship to God performed. And, since the priesthood in the patriarchal church is acknowledged to have been a right of primogeniture, and to have belonged to the first-born, as long as Adam lived, *he* was the priest of the most high God; and while his family continued together in the neighbourhood of their first dwelling, it is probable, if not certain, that this cherubic exhibition was the place of worship, or temple of the Adamic church, to which Cain and Abel, ‘in process of time,’ (or as it might be rendered, ‘on a set day’), brought their sacrifices; and from which Cain, for his horrid crime of murder and apostacy, was excommunicated, perhaps by his father’s sentence as priest, as well as by the punishment of God. ‘Behold,’ says he¹, ‘thou hast driven me out this day from the *face* of the earth, and from thy *face* (the cherubic *faces*) shall I be hid.’ And² it is said, ‘Cain went out from the presence (the face) of Jehovah, and dwelt in the earth—*nod*,’ a fugitive, separated, excommunicated person; not as we read it, ‘in the land of Nod,’ as if *Nod* had been the name of a country to which Cain went.

Upon this schism, or separation of Cain, (for it seems his removal from the place of worship was an act of his own, as well as a church sentence, and that he never sought to be reconciled by repentance),

¹ Gen. iv. 14.

² ver. 16.

tance), it is probable, idolatry began ; and Cain might have imagined or set up symbols of his own devising, before which his own family and church might worship. The true worship of God was to be found only in the family of Seth ; and he, as the first-born next to Cain, would become priest on the death of his father Adam. We accordingly read, that ‘ *then*,’ in his days, ‘ men called on the ‘ name of the Lord,’ which is not only a usual phrase for worshipping God in general, but has likewise a particular view, as will be seen hereafter. And, as the true and pure church was in Seth and his successors, so from what we read in the beginning of the sixth chapter of Genesis, it has been thought that Cain’s idolatrous and wicked church had multiplied to so great a degree, as to prevail on the church of Seth to mix among them, and have communion with them in their idolatrous worship, as well as in their abominable practices ; and that for this universal apostacy and corruption, God brought on the flood, and destroyed them all, except Noah and his family, who found grace in the eyes of the Lord ‘.

What became of the cherubim at that awful æra of divine vengeance, we know not, any more than what became of *Paradise*, or what particular change was wrought upon the earth by this universal deluge. No doubt Noah, who was the first-born

born¹, and consequently priest, and who had lived six hundred years before the flood, might have himself seen, or heard from others who had seen it, that the cherubic appearance was a symbol of great importance in, and encouragement to, the worship of Jehovah. For the first thing he does, after leaving the ark², is to build an *altar* to the Lord; which, as we have no mention made of any new precept for his doing so, and as the Lord approved what he did, and accepted his offering, is a strong argument that such had been the custom before the flood; and that he had seen such *altars* then, for the sacred purpose of worshipping God. There was, however, a Ham in his family, as there was a Cain in Adam's; and it was from an idolatrous imagination that the project of the tower of Babel was formed. This tower was designed for a temple, and for a separate worship, divided from, and independent upon, the true worship among the children of Heber. 'Go to,' say they³, 'let us build a city and a tower, whose top may be sacred, may reach to the heavens, and let us make us a name,' in opposition to the name *Jehovah*, which the true church worshipped, and of which we shall take some further notice as we proceed. This idolatrous project was soon disappointed, and instead of paying their devotion to *one idol*, as they designed by their union among

¹ St. Peter calls Noah a preacher of righteousness, a well-known title of the Messiah. ² Peter ii. 5.

³ Gen. viii. 20.

³ Gen. xi. 4.

among themselves', 'the people being one, and 'having one language or worship,' they, by the just judgement of God, fell off into a confusion of worships: and from this dispersion at Babel, proceeded all the different idolatries and kinds of worship, as well as the different languages of after times. In consequence of this, and in order that a true church and a pure worship might be preserved, God called Abram, as a chosen person for that purpose. And here again, as in the case of Noah, we find it was among Abram's first actions after his departure out of idolatrous Haran, to build an altar¹, and call upon the *name* of the Lord. This first tent and altar was between Bethel and Hai; a second tent and altar he built on the plains of Mamre². Again he planted a grove, an action of a sacred import, and to the same intent with building an altar, in Beersheba, and called upon the *name* of the Lord³. After his death, his son Isaac, the son of the promise, dwelt frequently in some of his father's old habitations, and had therefore the use of the altars which he had made. Only once at Beersheba, where Abraham had planted a grove, we read that Isaac pitched his tent, and built an altar⁴. In the history of Jacob, we have frequent testimonies of his zeal in this respect; as in his first journey to Padan-aram⁵, where

¹ Gen. xi. 6.² Gen. xii. 8.³ xiii. 18.⁴ xxi. 33.⁵ xxvi. 25.⁶ Gen. xxviii. 18.

where he set up the stone on which he had slept, for a sacred *pillar*; at his communing with Laban on his return¹, when he offered sacrifice on the mount; after his interview with Esau², at which time he bought a field from the Shechemites, and built an altar; and again at Bethel³, we are told he built an altar, and called the place El-bethel. From all which it would appear, that Jacob settled in the country, and consequently had the opportunity of stated worship at some or other of these consecrated places, until his removal into Egypt⁴, when it is said he came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifice to the God of his father Isaac. Whether this was done on the altar which Isaac had built there before, or whether Jacob had a portable altar with him on his journey, is not mentioned; though indeed it is probable that the patriarchs had such altars with them in their travels, for the convenience of daily worship; as we are not to imagine that these holy men never offered sacrifice or performed other acts of worship, but at the times and places which the scripture speaks of; since these are so few, constituting only the most remarkable solemnities of that kind, such as were holden on account of some extraordinary circumstance, or new revelation from God.

The history of these patriarchs being so particularly

¹ Gen. xxi. 54.

² xxxiii. 19.

³ xxxv. 7.

⁴ xli. 1.

larly recorded, and God's calling himself so commonly the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, shews, that to them and their family the true church and pure worship of God were confined; in consequence of which restriction, their *rearing altars*, and offering sacrifices, and calling on the name of the Lord were a continued tradition handed down from Noah, which he had seen in practice before the flood, and which can be traced to no other original but the cherubic exhibition after the fall. Even subsequent to the flood, we find such an exhibition to have been continued upon the erection of an altar, in order to consecrate the place, and be a sanctuary or *cherubim* to the church, while it remained in that neighbourhood; and at all these times, when the patriarchs built an altar anew, we are told, the Lord *appeared to*, or was seen by, them¹. The manner of this appearance, or how it was that the Lord was seen by them, deserves our attentive consideration. That he could be seen as God, is not to be supposed; such an appearance being contrary to the nature both of God and man, and being in direct opposition to the positive assertion of God himself to Moses², who, although he had found grace in a remarkable degree with God, and God had spoken to him as a man speaketh to a friend, yet on his ear-

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¹ See to this purpose Judges ii. 5. and particularly the history of Gideon, Judges vi. 22—24.

² Exod. xxxiii. 20.

nestly desiring to see God's glory, was denied his request, and told, 'thou canst not see my face, for 'there shall no man see my face and live.' And that this was a common belief among the Israelites, is evident from their behaviour at the delivery of the law from Mount Sinai¹, and from the history of Manoah, who said to his wife, 'We shall surely 'die, because we have seen God².' Not only the Jews, but even the more ignorant Gentiles had the same opinion of God's being invisible; for, through the whole of the Iliad, the work of their ancient poet Homer, and which is thought to contain a system of pagan theology, although their inferior deities are frequently made to descend and appear to the warriors on either side, yet their principal god, Jupiter, (whom the poet calls *Ἀναξ* or *πατήρ αἰδώς* *θεῶν*, King, or Father of Gods, as well as 'of men), seldom steps from his throne of majesty in heaven; or, if at any time he leaves Olympus, he approaches no nearer the earth than the top of Mount Ida; whence the poet gives him the epithet of *Ζεὺ Πατὴρ Ἰδηθῶν*, *Μηδῶν*, &c. Father Jupiter, who lookest from Ida, &c. And in conformity with this universally received notion among both Jews and Gentiles, the evangelist observes³, 'No man 'hath seen God at any time.' Yet that the patriarchs had frequently visions of God exhibited to them, is certain; and how to reconcile these seeming

¹ Exod. xx. 19.

² Judges xiii. 22.

³ St John i. 18.

ing contradictions, 'the Lord was seen by Abraham, Jacob,' &c. as the sacred historian expressly affirms, with this positive assertion of St John, we shall not easily find the means without having recourse to the *cherubim*, as exhibited to *Adam* at first, and described, by the prophet *Ezekiel* ¹, with a likeness *as the appearance of a man above them*, whom St John ² calls the *αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς θρόνου*, *the person that sitteth upon the throne*. This appearance of a *man* above the *cherubim*, the psalmist calls 'the shepherd of Israel' ³—'O shepherd of Israel, that dwellest between (or inhabitest) the cherubim, shine forth.' And, more expressly ⁴, he terms him *Jehovah*, 'Jehovah is king, he sitteth between the cherubim' ⁵. This *Jehovah*, (*יְהוָה בְּרִיבִים*, *jashub cherubim*, that sitteth between the cherubim, as the psalmist describes him), was the *Jehovah*, *the Lord that exhibited the cherubim to Adam*; the *Jehovah*, from whose presence or face (as exhibited in the cherubim) *Cain* went forth; the *Jehovah*, who appeared to the old patriarchs under various manifestations, sometimes as *Jehovah*, sometimes under the appellation of a *man*, sometimes under that of an angel. Thus, ⁶ it is said, 'the Lord *Jehovah* appeared to Abraham, yet we find ⁷, 'three men stood by him,' that is, by *Jehovah*, whom the patriarch addresses as the judge

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¹ Ezek. i. 26.² Revel. iv. 2.³ Psal. lxxx. 1.⁴ xcix. 1.⁵ See to this purpose 2 Sam. vi. 2. and 1 Chron. xiii. 6.⁶ Gen. xviii. 1.⁷ ver. 2.

of all the earth¹; and to whom this title eminently belongs we are told by the evangelists², ‘the Father ‘judgeth no man,’ &c. compared with what St Paul says³, ‘he will judge the world in righteousness ‘by that *man*, whom he hath ordained’—‘in that ‘he hath raised him from the dead.’ It was the same Jehovah, who afterwards appeared to Abraham, under the description of an angel, as is evident from the patriarch’s calling the place of that appearance *Jehovah Jireh*, ‘the Lord is seen;’ and from the angel’s taking this name to himself, and saying, ‘*by myself* have I sworn, *saith Jehovah*’⁴; &c. In Jacob’s return from Laban, he was singularly blest with a cherubic exhibition of the Jehovah Aleim⁵, where Jehovah again appears in the form or likeness of a *man*; and, after wrestling with the patriarch, gave him a remarkable benediction, and changed his name to Israel, ‘for as a prince hast ‘thou power with God and men.’ Accordingly Jacob was convinced that this was an appearance of Jehovah, or of a divine person; for ‘he called the name of the place *Peniel*,’ that is, the face of *El*; and the reason he assigns for so doing deserves our notice, ‘I have seen the Aleim face to face, and ‘my life is preserved’⁶;’ an observation which, if we compare with the passages already quoted, about ‘no man seeing God at any time,’ will obviously

¹ Gen. xlviii. 25.

² St Matth. xxv. 31. St John v. 22.

³ Acts xvii. 31.

⁴ Gen. xxii. 14. 15. 16.

⁵ Gen. xxxii. 24.

⁶ ver. 30.

viously direct us to the distinction of the *man* that wrestled with Jacob.

Such a divine person was Melchisedec, king of Salem, whose history is recorded in the book of Genesis, and fully illustrated by St Paul¹. I am aware that this person has, by some commentators, been identified with *Shem*, the son of Noah; but with how little reason, will be evident to any who will but read what the best of commentators, St Paul, says upon the subject. And the learned Mr Holloway, author of the '*Hebrew Originals*,' has proved him, in my opinion beyond contradiction, to be no other than the *second* person in the *divine Essence*, the *Jehovah*, who was so often *seen* by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who was seen by Hagar at the well, who spoke to Moses out of the bush, &c. the *man*, who was seen by Joshua at Jericho², and called himself, 'the captain of the host of *Jehovah*'; and, not to instance more, that *angel* of *Jehovah*, who was seen by Manoah and his wife³, and who manifested himself to be a divine person, by his ascending up to heaven in the flame of the altar! This *wondrous action*, as it is said to be⁴, convinced Manoah that he was God; and that therefore, according to the *general* belief, they should surely die, because they had *seen God*; till his wife, by reasoning in faith observed, that his
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¹ Heb. v. 6, 7, 8, 9. and ch. vii. throughout.

² Joshua v. 13.

³ Judges xiii.

⁴ ver. 19.

accepting a burnt-offering at their hands, was sufficient to give them good hopes, and to remove their fears.

We may observe, by the bye, that this exhibition, in common with all such solemn exhibitions of Jehovah, was made to Manoah and his wife with a particular view to institute a type of the Messiah or Christ, which *Sampson*, the son promised at this time, evidently was; as both his extraordinary strength, and the very meaning of his name served to imply. For Samson, or rather Shamson, comes from the Hebrew שמש, *shemash*, the sun¹. Now, that Christ, in scripture, is frequently called *the Sun*, is a well-known truth; and in one place the psalmist would seem to have had this type of Samson particularly in his view—‘In them hath
‘hath he set a tabernacle for the *Sun*, which is as a
‘bridegroom coming out of his chamber’, and rejoice as a *giant*, or *strong man*, which Samson remarkably was, ‘to run his race:’ and he concludes with a prayer to Christ under this figure—
‘Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation
‘of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, (or, literally,

¹ St Jerome’s book of Hebrew names, and Eucherius Instruct. Book II. ch. 1. and Epiphanius of Heresies, Heres. 53. agree in this observation, in consequence of which Archbishop Usher, De Primord. ch. v. conjectures that *Sampson*, Bishop of Dole, in Bretagne, was called *Heliaus*, from ἡλιος, the Greek word for the *sun*.

² Psal. xix. 4, 5, compared with Judges xiv. and xv.

rally to thy *faces*:—Hebrew *פָּנָי*), Jehovah my 'strength, (alluding to Samson), and my Redeemer,' which is always a proper name of Christ.

Here it may also be proper to observe, from this brief account of the several exhibitions of Jehovah to the people of the old world, that none of these appearances, or what is said of them, can be considered as any rule or warrant to christians, for paying worship or adoration of any kind, to created angels: for, when under the gospel revelation, St John, overpowered by a sense of gratitude, would have been worshipping the angel who communicated the heavenly visions to him, he was twice prohibited by the angel himself¹, and directed to perform his worship to God; and, if this was so strictly prohibited on that occasion, we cannot well suppose that such a practice would have been at all allowable to the people of God in former times. Their worshipping and offering sacrifices to the person who appeared to them, is a positive proof that the person so appearing was a *divine person*. And since, according to his own express declaration, God could not be seen *in his own nature*, it must follow, that he exhibited himself by some manifestation, or by some likeness that was visible, and to be seen by *human eyes*. But from a comparison of the few places of scripture already

¹ Revel. xix. 10. xxii. 9.

already noticed', we find that this likeness was *the appearance of a man*; and consequently, that the cherubim at first had this appearance too above it, designed at its first institution, and subsequent renewals, to display to mankind the redemption of the world by one of their own likeness. That the *cherubim* had such a view, and were looked upon in this light by our first parents, as the symbol of that gracious promise made to them immediately after their fall², and to keep man in mind of it until the period of its accomplishment, seems perfectly clear from Eve's joyful exclamation on the birth of Cain³, קניתי איש אחייהוה, 'I have gotten a 'man, the very Jehovah,' (not from Jehovah, as it is translated, the preposition *from* not being in the original), thereby declaring her hope, that that son was to be the *seed* promised, the *man deliverer*, typified and exhibited by the *cherubim*.

I have already hinted some reasons why beasts were pitched upon for the cherubic exhibition. I may here add, that perhaps upon this account, and with a view to this it is, that idolaters, who, in process of time, mistook the use and design of the *cherubim*, and fell off into devices of their own brain, are so often in scripture called *beasts* metonymically, and that God Almighty, for a signal punish-

¹ Ezek. i. Rev. iv. Ps. lxxx. 1. xcix. Exod. xxv. 18. 23. &c.

² Gen. iii. 15.

³ Gen. iv. 1.

punishment of idolatrous pride, turned Nebuchadnezzar, one of the kings of these *imaginers*, into a real *beast* for a certain time. It may also be remarked, that from a perverted application of the cherubic exhibition proceeded the system of the Egyptian idolatry, in worshipping before one of these cherubic creatures, separated from the rest of the exhibition, before the *bull* or *ox*. This sacred *bull* of theirs they called *Apis*, and the god whom they thought that he represented, *Osiris*; and from this *bull* in the Egyptian temples, did Aaron and the Israelites learn the fashion of their idol in the wilderness¹, which they made in the shape of a calf, and said, ‘These be thy *gods*, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt.’ The Egyptians, by their early communication and converse with the patriarchs, and by the continuance no doubt of the antediluvian tradition, might have had an obscure idea of the *sacred place* which the *bull* held among the other cherubic figures; and with a view to this it certainly was, that Aaron so far humoured the ridiculous desire of the people; since we can hardly suppose either them or him to have been so very ignorant, as to have attributed to a *real calf* or *bull*, the honour of their deliverance. Their sin consisted in foolishly mistaking the Egyptian hieroglyphick for the cherubic exhibition of Jehovah; and it was to guard against this sinful mistake, that the cherubim, by *divine appointment*, was *set up*, first in the tabernacle, and

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¹ Exod. xxxii. 4.

afterwards in the temple, to be the oracle of God's presence, the particular presence of that person in Jehovah, who had appeared to the holy patriarchs in former times.

This appearance in Jehovah, or rather *this person in Jehovah, who thus appeared above*, or, in scriptural language, *dwelt between the cherubim*, was, under the œconomy of the tabernacle and temple, called 'the glory of the Lord,' or rather *Jehovah the glory* כבוד יהוה, *chabod Jehovah*, as we find it so frequently mentioned in the sacred history¹. This then is the SHECHINAH so much boasted of by the Jews, which indeed is no other than one of the eternal persons in *Jehovah Aleim*, manifesting himself in such a glorious manner, as might be seen by man; and by such a manifestation displaying, under a symbolical institution, the mystery of man's redemption: and, as the heinousness of Aaron's sin consisted chiefly in renouncing this glorious revelation, and, as the psalmist expresses it², 'in changing *their* glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth hay,' so we find, that after the cherubim of the temple was reared, Jeroboam fell into the same *damnable* imagination; and, not content with one monument of idolatry³, he made two calves, with the same idea which Aaron formerly had, and set the one in *Bethel*, and the other in *Dan*. For this act he is

¹ See Exod. xi. and xxxiv. Lev. ix. 4. 6. 23. Num. vii. 89. xiv. 10. xvi. 19. 42. 1 Kings viii. 11. compared with 2 Chron. v. 14. vii. 2.

² Ps. cvi. 20.

³ 1 Kings xii. 28.

is branded with the wretched character of Jero-boam, the son of Nebat, who made ‘ *Israel to sin* :’ and throughout the whole history of the Jews, this seems to have been the principal ingredient of their idolatry, their departing from the *cherubic* exhibitions, and renouncing *Jehovah* the *glory*, to worship before *one* of the cherubic faces separated from the rest, and set up as a distinct independent *Aleim* or *God*. For this detestable crime it was, that God sold them into the hands of idolaters, and carried them into captivity to Babylon, where idolatry after the flood was first begun ; thereby chastising their corruptions, and teaching them, if they would have been taught, to read the nature of their sin in the manner of their punishment. And hence we may assign a reason, which the Jews themselves have never been willing to assign, why this Shechinah, or *Jehovah* the *glory*, כבוד-יהוה, was removed, as they themselves acknowledge, from the first times of their second temple, because, as we shall see afterwards, this *Shechinah*, this same CHABOD JEHOVAH, *Jehovah* the *glory*, returned to it, before it was finally demolished. This, then, is the great point of difference between the Jews and us, which having now reached, I shall endeavour to elucidate in a satisfactory manner.

The Jews do to this day affirm, that the *Shechinah* was still absent from the second temple ; we, on the contrary say, that JESUS CHRIST, whom their forefathers put to death, was the very SHECHINAH

of the Mosaic tabernacle and of Solomon's temple, the **ATH CHABOD JEHOVAH**, *the very glory Jehovah*, who, from the first ages of the antediluvian, patriarchal, and Jewish churches, had appeared to, and been seen by, men ; and not only so, but that even while he was upon earth, in his seemingly low state, and under the oppression of persecution and disgrace, He, at certain times, and in certain places, emitted sufficient displays and exhibitions of this glory before the eyes of his followers.

In proof of this grand important truth, I must indeed make use of the testimonies of his disciples and friends, which may at first sight seem but weak and inconclusive, and in that view, may be rejected by those that are his professed enemies. But, in prosecution of the argument, I shall ask no more for the apostles and historians of Jesus, than the Jews do require for Moses and their writers. In defence of their law against the cavils and objections of heathens, it has been very properly argued, that Moses, the lawgiver of the Jews, was sufficiently capable to know the truth of what he wrote ; that he could have no view in advancing a falsehood, nor by so doing serve any interest ; and that if he had, as the Jews were set in the midst of so many nations that hated them, he would soon have been contradicted, and his falsehoods easily exposed and confuted. But so far from this, we find him making frequent appeals to the very enemies of his people ; and several of the facts, which he narrates, were acknowledged

ledged by their hostile neighbours to be genuine and true. The same is to be said for the gospel of Jesus ; nor can it be thought, that a body of men would have agreed in ruining themselves, or have run the risk of losing their all, and of meeting with nothing but torments and death, for the sake of telling an idle story, and deceiving the world with an imposture. This pleads strongly indeed for their honesty ; and to remove any objection as to their want of capacity, from the circumstance of their being but illiterate fishermen, we find that they never appeared in public, nor undertook to write any account of what they saw, until they were endued with power from on high, and filled with the holy Spirit of God, not in a corner, but openly before all the people of the Jews, assembled at one of their most solemn festivals. If, then, the arguments urged for the law of Moses be valid, the same arguments will, and must be, valid, when urged for the gospel of Christ ; and there is as good ground to adduce the authority of the evangelists and apostles for the one, as there is to quote the authority of Moses and the prophets for the other ; so that the Jews and we are at least upon an equal footing ; and we are no more to be found fault with by them, for quoting the *New Testament*, than they are to be blamed by pagans or atheists, for the credit they give to the *Old*. We have had authors to defend the christian religion, as well as *they* have had to extol the Jewish ; and the christian Grotius, Stillingfleet, Addison, &c. deserve

deserve as much regard as the Jewish Maimonides, R. Kimchi, or other Rabbins. If the present controversy were with direct infidels, or with dissembling Deists, or with freethinkers, there would be a necessity for expatiating upon this topic. But as it is with Jews, who receive one half of our bible, what has been said will be sufficient in vindication of the other half; and they can have no just reason to reject the writings of the *gospel*, unless they would give a handle to others to reject the writings of the *law*.

Let us, see, then, if the writings of the *gospel*, supported by, and in conformity with, the writings of the Jewish prophets, afford us any light in the present case, with relation to the *Shechinah*, or *cherubic glory*; and for the better comprehending the state of the question, I shall discuss it in the following three particular enquiries.

I. Whether the bible in general affords any confirmation of this position, that *Jesus Christ* was the *Shechinah* of the Jews.

II. Whether from any thing said in scripture, any discovery can be made, wherein this *Shechinah* of *Jesus* was displayed.

III. Whether any symbol or symbols of this *Shechinah* be continued with the christian church, and what this symbol is, or these symbols are.

And,

And, on the whole, I hope to make it appear, that the christian œconomy or dispensation is not so defective in this particular, as all the Jews, and even some modern christians, do very groundlessly imagine.

In the first place, then, let us see whether the bible gives any help towards the proof of this position, that *Jesus Christ* was the *Shechinah* of the Jews, even in the days of his flesh, and humiliation upon earth. And here we must have recourse to the accounts left us by the four historians of his life, whom we call the *Evangelists*; and of whom, tho' the last in order in our bibles, yet St John deserves to be first noticed, as he goes farther back than the other three, and traces the *original* (if such a term may be used) of Jesus from the beginning. 'In the beginning,' says he, 'was the word;' just as Moses had said, 'In the beginning God created.' By this we are not to understand, according to the common acceptation, *beginning of time*, otherwise we shall fall into the Arian error, which attributed a beginning to the *word*; and said, there was a time when the word was not, or had not a being. The Greek word *λογος*, used by St John, corresponds with the Hebrew *ראשית*, used by Moses, and properly signifies

† May not the *λογος* of St John, as corresponding with the *ראשית* of Moses, be construed as a nominative to the substantive verb *היה*, so that the sense will be, that the 'In the beginning' of Moses is the very *Logos*, or word, of whom St John is to speak?

fies the *head, fountain, principle*, from which a thing proceeds. Thus there is a passage in the Revelation¹, where Jesus is called ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ, ‘the beginning of the creation of God;’ but more properly, according to the meaning of the word ἀρχή, the *Head*, or *Principle*, by which the creation was made, as St John says of him², ‘by Him were all things made;’ and St Paul says³, ‘by whom God made the worlds.’ This divine WORD was in the world⁴, and exhibited himself to the world, though the world in general did not know or discern him. Thus *he came* to Abram⁵, and *was revealed* to Samuel⁶, and to the old prophet of Bethel⁷, and to many more of the Jewish prophets. These were but transient exhibitions, made on solemn occasions, and for certain purposes. But at last the time came, that the *divine word* made a permanent residence among men—and⁸ ‘*the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.*’ How, or after what manner, the word became flesh, is far beyond our capacity to conceive or describe; for even St Paul acknowledged that it was wonderful—⁹ ‘great is the mystery of godliness, *God manifest in the flesh.*’ But as to the expression of *his dwelling among us*, it comprehends a great deal more than
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¹ Revel. iii. 14.

² St. John i. 3.

³ Heb. i. 2.

⁴ St John i. 10.

⁵ Gen. xv. i. 4.

⁶ 1 Sam. iii. 21.

⁷ 1 Kings xiii. 20.

⁸ St John i. 14.

⁹ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

is generally thought. The original, ἐσκηνοῦσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, literally signifies, he *tabernacled* or *pitched his tent*, in our natures or flesh; and thus has a direct allusion to the first institution of the *cherubim*, of which we have been speaking, and which, it is said, ‘the Lord God, *יְהוָה jashaken*, INHABITED,’ not so properly, *placed*, as our translation renders it. In this sense it is said, ‘the high and lofty one, *עַל יְהוָה*, *inhabiteth* eternity;’ and so ‘that glory may dwell, *יְהוָה*, in our land.’ And from this Hebrew word *יָשַׁן* comes not only the Hebrew word for the tabernacle, but likewise the Greek σκηνη, a tabernacle, and the verb σκηνοῦν, to pitch a tabernacle.

A tabernacle, in scripture language, is a moveable habitation, dedicated or set apart to religious use. We have seen that Paradise was a sacred tabernacle or tent; and it is remarked, that in the times of the patriarchal church, in most places where the patriarchs built an *altar*, it is said they pitched a *tent*¹. Thus Moses was ordered to rear a tabernacle for receiving the glory of God; and from this tabernacle, in which were placed the cherubim, did the glory of the Lord appear. In the same sense did the *Word*, who was co-eternal with God, exhibit himself from or out of the *tabernacle* of human flesh. The body, which he assumed from the virgin, was the tabernacle of his divinity or
VOL. II. I glory;

¹ Isa. lvii. 15.

² Ps. lxxxv. 9.

³ See Gen. xii. 8. xiii. 18. xxvi. 25.

glory; hence the word *tabernacle* is used by St. Peter to signify the *body*: ‘ ‘ as long,’ says he, ‘ as ‘ I am in this *tabernacle*,’ &c. ‘ knowing that shortly ‘ I must put off this *tabernacle*,’ &c. This explanation will aid us in understanding another passage in the Revelation, of which the meaning seems otherwise somewhat obscure. It is as follows; * and he ‘ opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to ‘ blaspheme his name and his *tabernacle*, and them ‘ that dwell (*tabernacle*) in heaven.’ The tabernacle here mentioned can be no other than the tabernacle of Christ’s human body, as it is called God’s tabernacle; and as the *name* of God that goes before is to be taken for the *Divinity* of Christ, as we shall see afterwards; and what follows, ‘ they ‘ that have their tabernacle, or dwell in heaven,’ is to be applied to the hypostatic union of *God the name*, and *Man the tabernacle*, into one person; which person may well be spoken of in the plural number, to denote the two natures in Christ. So that this blasphemy, here mentioned, is to be applied to all those, whether pagans, Jews, or pretending christians, that deny either the divinity or humanity of Christ, or presume to set up their impudent *reason* in opposition to the gospel declaration, that the ‘ *word* was made *flesh* :’ and that the word *tabernacle* here is to be meant of Christ’s body, we are warranted in believing by St Paul †, where he calls

* 2 St Peter i. 13. 14.

† Revel. xiii. 6.

‡ Heb. viii. 2.

calls Christ 'the minister of the sanctuary, and of 'the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and 'not man;' and again', an 'high priest of good 'things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is, not of this 'building,' &c. In both these places, the apostle, as is plain from the context, not only had the body or humanity of Christ in his eye, but designed likewise to give it the preference before the Jewish tabernacle, which he proves to have been only pointed to, as a type of Christ's body, or, in the language of St John, to have been a figure of the 'word's becoming *flesh*.' Here then, that is to say, *in our flesh*, did Christ pitch his *tabernacle*, in allusion to those tabernacles, and in *verification* of them, which under the Jewish law were reared only by *men*; whereas this true gospel tabernacle was built by Jehovah; upon which account, *Jesus*, or the *Son*, is said by an apostle* to be 'the first-born of 'every creature.'

As this is the christian tabernacle, let us see next if in this tabernacle there was any exhibition or appearance resembling, or correspondent with, the Shechinah, or כְּבוֹד־יְהוָה, of the Jewish tabernacle: and in this point we shall find St John both clear and full. 'The word,' says he, 'was made flesh, 'and *tabernacled* among us, and we *beheld his glory*,' an expression of the same nature, and to the same

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purport

* Heb, ix. 11.

2 Col. i. 15.

purport with the term used in the Old Testament, where it is said, 'the glory of the Lord appeared.' And that the *glory*, here spoken of by St John, is the same with the *glory* which appeared between the cherubim of the Jewish tabernacle, must be evident to any one who will but consider and compare the Old and New Testaments together.

In many places of the Old Testament, the Jewish prophets have an eye to this evangelical glory, and plainly foretel the restitution of that *Shechinah*, or tabernacle glory, which dwelt between the cherubim. Thus says Isaiah¹, 'In that day shall the 'branch of the Lord' (צמח-יהוה) Jehovah the branch (an acknowledged title of the Messiah) 'be for a 'beauty, and (לכבוד) for a glory'—exactly parallel to what Zechariah says², 'Behold the man whose 'name is the BRANCH, he shall build the temple of 'the Lord³, and he shall bear the *glory*.' So likewise says Isaiah⁴, 'In that day, there shall be a 'root of Jesse; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and 'his rest shall be *glory*.' Again⁵, 'The wilderness 'and the solitary place' (meaning the Gentile nations) 'shall be glad: the *glory* of Lebanon shall 'be given to it, they shall see (לראו) the glory 'of the Lord:' just the same promise as is made in other passages: 'Arise, shine, for thy light is 'come,

¹ Isa. iv. 2.

² Zech. vi. 12. 13.

³ See St John ii. 2. 'He spake of the temple of his body.'

⁴ Isa. xi. 10.

⁵ Isa. xxxv. 1.

‘come, and the *glory* of the Lord is risen upon thee; darkness shall cover the earth—but Jehovah shall rise upon thee, and his *glory* shall be seen by thee.’ ‘The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy *glory*’—and ‘I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see my *glory*.’ I shall only point out two more passages relative to the same purpose, but they are of such a nature, as to put this truth beyond all contradiction. The one is ¹, ‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord,’ &c. Which very prophecy is applied by all the evangelists to St John the Baptist ², as the immediate forerunner of Christ: and then says the prophet ³, ‘The GLORY of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.’ The other passage is in Haggai ⁴, ‘The desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with GLORY.’ ‘The GLORY of this latter house shall be greater than the GLORY of the former, saith the Lord of hosts.’

Directed by so many concurrent prophecies, it was no wonder that the pious and devout Jews looked so earnestly for the coming of the Messiah, and for the restoration of that *glorious* appearance, by which Jehovah had in former times been *seen* among

¹ Isa. lxii. 2.² ch. lxi. 18.³ ch. xl. 3.⁴ St Matth. iii. 3. St Mark i. 3. St Luke iii. 4. St John i. 23.⁵ Isa. xl. 5.⁶ Haggai ii. 7. 9.

among *men*. Hence, upon the birth of Christ, we find *Simeon*, that just man, who waited for the consolation of Israel, not only rejoicing on his seeing the Lord's Christ, but likewise applying to him the prophecies that I have just noticed. 'Mine eyes,' says he', 'have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared before all people, *a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the GLORY of thy people Israel.*' The former part of this title had been promised before², 'I will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant to the people, for *a light of the Gentiles.*' And again³, 'I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles;' and⁴, 'the Gentiles shall come to thy light,' &c. And here, in regard to Simeon's manner of expression, it deserves our notice, that he makes a distinction between what Christ was to be to the Gentiles, and what to the people of Israel. To the Gentiles he was a LIGHT, but to *Israel* he was the GLORY. There is a particular force in this distinction; the Gentiles had no knowledge or acquaintance with כבודי, 'the *glory of the Lord*;' they had long before that time lost sight of the original *cherubic exhibition*; and God had not as yet set up any other exhibition of himself, or of his *glory*, among them. This was the peculiar favour vouchsafed to the children of Israel. The *tabernacle* was theirs, which among other things, says St Paul⁵, had 'the *cherubim*'
of

² St Luke ii. 30.

² Isaiah xlii. 6.

³ Isaiah xlix. 6.

⁴ Isaiah lx. 3.

⁵ Heb. ix. 5.

' of glory ;' and hence this *glory* is called **THEIR glory**, ' the glory of Israel. Simeon directs the Jews to a more especial consideration of this *child*, as being their *glory*, the revival of their former *glory*, or *Shechinah* ; by which denomination they could not but know and comprehend the design of his *appearance* ; though the Gentiles, for want of the *cherubim of glory* among them, could not have any just or adequate idea of a Saviour under that appellation. Nor is it to be doubted, but that the pious Simeon, being under the influence of the Holy Ghost, did *see*, in the child Jesus, some manifestation of this *glory*, which, for wise reasons of Divine Providence, might for some time have been concealed from the rest of the Jews. That the birth of Christ was ushered in with a *visible glory* is most certain, from the particular account given us by St Luke* ; and the *glory of the Lord*, there mentioned, is a literal translation into Greek of the כבוד־יהוה, *the glory of Jehovah* in the Old Testament. Whether the angel that proclaimed the joyful tidings was not a *divine person*, the person in Jehovah, who appeared in old times, or in other words, the *divinity* of Christ, may be a subject proper for exercising our meditations ; especially since there seems to be a distinction made between this angel and the multitude of the heavenly host that attended him ; which multitude³ is called, in the plural number, the *angels*. We may likewise employ

* Psal. cvi. 20. Jerem. ii. 11. 1 Sam. iv. 21, 22.

² St Luke ii. 9.

³ St Luke ii. 13—15.

ploy our devout enquiries to good purpose upon the short doxology sung by the heavenly host on this glorious solemnity; which, from the nature of the construction, may be rendered ‘good will to-wards men’ (or, literally, *complacency, delight, &c.* in human nature, as *‘εὐδοκία ἐν ἀνθρώποις* will signify) is ‘glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth.’ And if this interpretation be just, as there can little be said against it, will it not import, that the incarnation of Christ is both *the glory in the highest, and the blessed source of peace upon earth?* We have much the same exclamation in a subsequent chapter, ‘Blessed be the king that cometh in the name of the Lord, *peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.*’ But I shall leave this to pious people, to think of as they see reason; as also the nature of the *star* that was seen by the wise men of the east^a; whether this star might not have been some exhibition of the *cherubic glory*, although our conceptions are not adequate to the nature of such a peculiarly splendid exhibition. It must be allowed, however, that what St John says on this head is sufficiently plain and demonstrative. I shall transcribe the whole paragraph: ‘We beheld his GLORY, the GLORY as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth; and of his *fulness* have we all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time,

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^a St Luke xix. 38.

^a St Matth. ii. 9, 10.

‘the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared him.’ Here let it be observed, that the evangelist clearly declares the GLORY of Jesus to have been *visible*; for how shall a thing be beheld unless it appear, and how shall it appear, so as that men may behold it, but in some *outward sensible exhibition* ? Certain it is, the expression, *we BEHELD his glory*, is a clear argument that this glory was something *visible*, something different from the common notion of *glory*, as it means *reputation, honour, &c.* which may well be perceived by the faculties of the mind, but cannot be said to be seen by the eyes of the body.

There is also a peculiar energy in what the evangelist says of *the word*, that he was ‘*full of grace and truth* ;’ according to what St Paul adds *, ‘ for it pleased, it was the good pleasure of the Deity, that in him (Christ) should all *fulness* dwell.’ And again †, ‘ In him dwelleth all the *fulness* of the god-head bodily.’ But what especially deserves our attention is the particular application of *truth* to the *word made flesh*. Our blessed Lord calls himself the

VOL. II. K *truth*,

¹ Perhaps critics in the language might think they perceived some analogy between two of the evangelist's words—*σκηνωσεν*, *he tabernacled*, from whence comes the Latin *scena*, in English, a *scene* or *stage*, and *θεατρομετα*, *we beheld*, whence comes *theatrum*; in English, a *theatre*. From which analogy it might be deduced, that *human flesh* was the *scene*, and *earth* the *theatre*, upon which spectators beheld the glory of the Divine Person in Jehovah, who assumed that flesh.

² Col. i. 19.

3 ch. ii. 9.

truth’, the AMEN, *the true and faithful witness*. From this ¹ in Hebrew, comes the Hebrew word for *truth*, in Greek ἀληθεια, in Latin *veritas*; all which signify *reality* in opposition to *mystery*, as well as *honesty* in opposition to *falsehood*: and that it is in this signification principally, that it is to be applied to Christ here, is to be gathered from the contradistinction put by the evangelist—‘the law’ was given by *Moses*, but *grace* and *truth* came by ‘*Jesus Christ*.’ Here the *truth of Christ*, or *Christ the truth*, is set as a counterpart to the *law of Moses*, not as if the law was to be charged with falsehood, of which such a divine institution cannot possibly admit, but as it was so full of *mysteries, types, shadows, and figures*, of which Christ was the *truth the reality, the substance and accomplishment*. Hence it is, that Christ so frequently introduces his declaration with an ἀμην, αμην, or, as we read it, ‘*verily, verily, I say unto you*,’ literally—I the Amen, or the Truth, verily say unto you. Hence it is, that, immediately before he gave up the ghost, he cried τετελεσται, ‘*all is perfected or finished* ;’ according to which St Paul calls Christ’s body ‘*a better and more perfect, τελειοτερας, finished tabernacle*’, &c. There is a most applicable text to this purpose in the Psalms, which is peculiarly characteristic of Christ ²—‘*mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*’ *Righteousness*

¹ St John xiv. 6. Rev. iii. 14.

² Heb. ix. 11.

³ Psalm lxxxv. 10.

eousness and *peace* are two principal attributes of Christ ; and St Paul's explication of Melchisedec, in this sense, is most pertinent' : ' This Melchisedec, ' king of Salem, being, by interpretation of his name, ' Melchizedec king of *righteousness*, and by his ' kingdom king of Shalam, that is, king of *peace*.' By which description we are taught to look for the blessed union of *righteousness* and *peace*. And in the same divine person it is, that *mercy* and *truth* have met ; and (which is directly to our purpose, viz. that Christ's *body* or *flesh* was the *truth* or *substance* of the Jewish types) the Psalmist immediately adds, ' *Truth shall spring out of the earth.*' The Hebrew is צֶמַח, shall *branch*, which is one of the epithets of Christ *, for which the Septuagint version of this psalm has ἀνέτελλε, ' has sprung or shone ;' and accordingly in Zechariah, instead of the *branch*, they, the Septuagint translators, read, *whose name is* ' ἀνατολή, the *day-spring* or *east*, which appellation is used in the song of Zacharias †, ' the day-spring ' from on high,' &c.

Now in what respect can it be said that truth has *branched*, or *shone* from the earth? Certainly in respect of the incarnation of Christ, when the word was made flesh, and by assuming the human body, and appearing upon earth, did fulfil all the types and shadows of the law ; and shewed himself

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* Heb. vii. 2.

† Isa. iv. 2. Zech. vi. 12.

3 St Luke i. 78.

to be the *truth* of what had been before exhibited only in figure. Another part of the psalm, just now quoted, has a manifest aspect to this person in Jehovah. 'Surely' says the psalmist, 'his *salvation*' (a New Testament appellation of Christ¹) is nigh 'them that fear him, that GLORY may dwell in our 'land,' *לשכן כבוד בארצנו*, in our earth, or according to what St John says, 'The word was made flesh, 'and dwelt among us².'

But I go on to another observation from St. John's words—'No man hath seen God at any 'time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom 'of the Father, he hath declared him.' We have already seen the universality of this belief both among Jews and Gentiles, that no man hath seen God at any time, confirmed; and it is here confirmed by the assertion of a gospel-writer. From all which testimonies put together, it undeniably follows, that the divine person, who so oft appeared in old times, was not HE, the pure unclouded Deity, whom no human eyes could behold. And, though neither Jewish doctors nor heathen philosophers could positively say, how or by whom so many heavenly appearances were made, yet the evangelist St John expressly tells us, that God was declared or exhibited to the world by the *Son*, by the
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¹ St Luke ii. 30, iii. 6. compared with Isa. iv. 5. where what the prophet calls 'the glory of the Lord,' the evangelist calls 'the salvation of God.'

² St John i. 14.

the word made flesh, whose GLORY the world saw; the same glory which had so frequently appeared among the Jews, and been seen by them. Accordingly St Paul ¹ calls the Son *the brightness*, in Greek *απαύλασμα*, the vivid display or shining forth of the glory, in conformity to what the psalmist had said before ², ‘Thou, that inhabitest the cherubim, shine forth—in the sight of Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh, stir up thy strength, and come to be our salvation.’ The whole of this psalm is a prayer for the restoration of the church; and, by the style of it, has a direct view to the Messiah. What follows in particular clearly points to the incarnation—‘Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand ³, and upon the Son of Man, whom thou madest strong for thine own self: whom thou didst choose to be united to thyself ⁴.’ This petition is made to him that sitteth between the cherubim; and, by the mention of the humanity, the man *איש*, and Son of man *בן-אדם* to be joined to this *ישב כרובים*, that inhabiteth the cherubim, we are directed to the idea, which we ought to have of the *shining forth* spoken of in the first verse. Indeed all the forms of expression in the psalm do clearly imply, that the *shining forth* prayed for, and prophesied of, was to be a *visible exhibition* ⁵. And from whom to expect this exhibition we are taught by

¹ Heb. i. 3.

² Psal. lxxx. 1.

³ See also Psalm cx. 1. Acts ii. 34. and vii. 56, &c.

⁴ See Gal. iv. 4. Heb. ii. 16, &c.

⁵ See ver. 2, 3. 19.

by St Paul, in the passages just cited, viz. from the Son, by whom God spake to the world in the last days; and by St John¹, viz. ‘from the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father.’

I have dwelt the longer on this prefatory description given by St John, because it not only serves to explain and apply the several ancient prophecies, which I have before quoted, about the *world's seeing God's glory*, but because it is likewise a key for opening up and illustrating many passages of the New Testament, which will otherwise appear difficult, if not unintelligible. If the account left us of our Saviour's life upon earth be found to contain any further testimonies of the divine glory appearing in or upon Christ, we shall have still more and more demonstrations of the divinity of the gospel, and that the religion of christians did not want a *Shechinah*, or glory, any more than that of the Jews.

Upon reading the histories of the evangelists, (St John's Gospel in particular) I think there are no less than four passages, where the existence of a *Shechinah* or *glory* is at least insinuated, if not directly affirmed. One is, after the transaction at Cana, in Galilee, (of which I may perhaps take some further notice before I have done), where it is said², ‘*he manifested forth his glory,*’ as it is said
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¹ St John i. 18.

² St John ii. 11.

in the Old Testament, 'the glory of the Lord appeared.' To *manifest* a thing is to *make it visible*, as God is said to be *manifest*, or made visible in the flesh. Accordingly it would seem his disciples at this time saw some *remarkable* appearance of a divine manifestation: for it is said, that *on manifesting forth his glory*, they believed on him, 'ἐπιστεύοντες αὐτόν;' thereby acknowledging Him (as critics have observed from the terms 'πίστευον αὐτόν') to be God.

The next passage I have in my view, is the history of the transfiguration', which undeniably proves a visible *exhibition of glory* on that occasion. St Luke says expressly*, 'the disciples SAW HIS GLORY;' and St Peter, to the same purpose, tells us†, that they were 'eye-witnesses of his majesty.' And there is one thing particularly to be remarked, that *on seeing the GLORY*, St Peter proposed *making TABERNACLES*, a circumstance recorded by all the three evangelists. Did not St Peter, as being a Jew, well know that *tabernacle*, σκηνή, and *glory*, δόξα, were mutually related; and that, as the *glory* had been the ornament of the *Mosaic tabernacle*, so it was proper, wherever this GLORY made its appearance, to erect a TABERNACLE for its reception? Nay, is not this in strict conformity with the pious devotion of the old patriarchs, spoken

* St Matth. xvii. 1. St Mark ix. 2. St Luke ix. 28.

† St Luke ix. 32.

‡ St Peter i. 16.

ken of before, *in pitching a tent*, or, in St Peter's language, '*making a tabernacle*,' in the place where *Jehovah the glory* manifested himself to them? This was the *cherubic glory*, or the glory of the Old Testament which the disciples at this time saw, and which, by St Peter's proposal, it would seem they then believed, was to be restored and re-settled among them. They were, it is true, somewhat mistaken; and this mistake was corrected by the voice from heaven, which informed them, that they were no longer to look for, or expect *tabernacle glory*, as in the times of the law, that is, mere figures and types; that the beloved Son was now both *tabernacle* and *glory*, by means of the union of the word and flesh in one person; that there was no further necessity for *rearing tabernacles*; but that the one thing needful now was, to hear and receive Christ, in whom all these adumbrations of the Mosaic œconomy were now really and substantially verified—'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.'

A third occasion, on which it is probable some glorious exhibition was manifested in the person of Christ, was when he addressed the Father in that remarkable prayer', '*Father, glorify thy name*; 'then came there a voice from heaven, saying, 'I have both glorified and will glorify *it* (or *thee*, 'as there is no accusative added) again.' The people

ple that stood by and heard it, said, 'It thunder-
 'ed; others said, An angel spake to him.' Here
 certainly was a great solemnity; the voice from
 heaven *being no doubt attended, as was usual on such*
*striking occasions*¹, with some *visible manifestation*
 of his *glory*. Let the 17th chapter of St John's
 gospel be carefully read, and I do not doubt, but
 that good reasons will occur for the explanations
 given of this *glorifying voice*, at present under con-
 sideration. But to proceed. There is a fourth
 passage in St John's Gospel, the meaning and beauty
 of which we shall not sufficiently discern, with-
 out taking along with us what I have been advanc-
 ing. The passage, to which I allude, is where the
 evangelist is describing our Saviour's apprehension.
² 'Jesus, knowing all things that should come upon
 'him, said unto them, Whom seek ye? They an-
 'swered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto
 'them, I am he.' Upon which 'they went back-
 'ward, and fell to the ground.' The stunning ef-
 fect of the observation lies in our Saviour's answer,
 'I am he'—in the original, 'I AM, *ἐγώ εἰμι*,' without
 the pronoun *he*. It is well known, that I AM is
 an incommunicable name of the true God—that
name, by which he ordered Moses to make him
 known to the Jews. ³ 'Thus shalt thou say to the
 'children of Israel; *I am* hath sent me unto you.'
 From the Hebrew root, here used, comes the word

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*Jehovah,*¹ St Matth. iii. 16. xvii. 5. Acts ix. 3, 4. x. 3.² St John xviii. 4.³ Exod. iii. 14.

Jehovah, the *proper* name, as we would say, of God—that name so sacred among the Jews, as to be distinguished by a peculiar title, viz. the TETRAGRAMMATON, the word of four letters; and so scrupulously circumspect were they with regard to this word *Jehovah*, that, as their Rabbins tell us, if they found on the way any bit of paper with Hebrew characters, they laid it carefully up, and put it to no common use, lest, if perhaps the word *Jehovah* should have been written upon it, they would run the risk of profaning that ineffable name. The Septuagint, in this place of Exodus, translate the Hebrew אֱלֹהִים, by the Greek ὁ ὢν, which very Greek appellation is twice used in the first chapter of St John's Revelation, once where it is applied to God directly, 'Grace unto you and peace, ἀπο τοῦ ὁ ὢν, from him who is,' or literally from the *I am*, &c. and again applied to Jesus Christ—'I am Alpha and Omega, saith the Lord, ὁ ὢν, the I am,' &c. I AM, then, is the name of GOD, the incommunicable name *Jehovah*, importing that existence or being is only God's property, and that he alone is the *essence*, who has essence from himself.

I make no doubt, but to those who study the Hebrew language, it will appear well worth observation, that in those several passages of the Old Testament, where a person is said to answer to a call, the verb of existence, which grammarians call the verb substantive, is never made use of.—

Thus

Thus ' God called Abraham, and he said 'אני,' in the Septuagint, ἰδὲ ἐγώ, ' Behold I': But our English translators, paying greater regard to the idiom of their own tongue, than to the force and meaning of the sacred original; and proposing, as we say, ' to make sense of it,' have inserted the substantive verb; and now we read in this and similar places—' here am I.' From the verb *am*, however, being wanting, both in the Hebrew, and in the Greek of the Septuagint, we may have ground to remark, that *being* or *to be* is God's prerogative, and that none can justly say of himself, I AM, but He, who has existence from himself, the self-existent Jehovah, the *true* I AM, the *essence existing*. This divine name *Jehovah*, or I AM, Jesus takes to himself on another occasion, in his conversation with the Jews³, when he tells them, that their father Abraham ' *saw his day, and was glad*:' and, on the Jews objecting to the possibility of that, as Abraham was dead so long before *he* was born, he thus removes that objection. ' ⁴Before Abraham was,' ἐγώ εἰμι, ' I AM;' not as our modern writers, in their zeal for purity of style, would have said ' *I was*,' but in the *present* tense ' *I am*.' Had there been nothing peculiar in this expression, I AM, the Jews might have ridiculed him, as our nice grammarians would readily have done, for speaking incohe-

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¹ Gen. xxii. 1.

² See 1 Sam. 4. 6. 8. In all which places Samuel, on being called by God, still answers, ' Behold I,' &c.

³ St John viii.

⁴ ver. 58.

rent nonsense. But the Jews, we find, looked upon the expression in another light, as being a *blasphemous profanation* of the divine name, I AM, which they believed, and very justly, belonged to none other but God. And upon this account it was, that they took up stones to cast at him ; which, had they considered Jesus to be a fool, (as some no doubt, from his language, would have been disposed to consider him), would have been an act of the most idle and wanton cruelty : But their preparing to stone him to death, which was the appointed punishment for the sin of blasphemy, plainly shewed, that they believed him to have been guilty of that crime, by arrogating to himself one of the divine titles¹. Yet, if they would have looked back to their own prophets, they would have seen, that even in their writings, the name *Jehovah* was often applied to the Messiah. For instance, in the prophet Isaiah we read², ‘ Thus saith *Jehovah*, your ‘ *Redeemer* : ’³ ‘ As for our *Redeemer*, *Jehovah* is his name ;’

¹ By the bye, this may help to account for the ridiculous story among the Jewish Doctors, that ‘ Jesus of Nazareth,’ as they call our Saviour, had somehow or other stolen the *tetragrammaton*, or ineffable name *Jehovah*, out of the sanctuary, which he magically sewed into his thigh, and by virtue of that *charm*, performed all his many miraculous works. However senseless such a tradition must be thought, it shews that the Jews once knew, that Jesus had made use of this divine name ; and we are not to wonder that this account, like all other discoveries which have for their object the authenticity of the gospel, should be much corrupted from the original truth, in passing through such pilfering and treacherous hands, as the Jewish Rabbins are well known to have been.

² Isaiah xliii. 14.

³ xlvii. 4.

‘name:’ ‘Thus saith *Jehovah*, thy *Redeemer*:’
 ‘I, *Jehovah*, thy *Saviour* and *Redeemer*:’ ‘I will
 ‘raise unto David a righteous branch—and this is
 ‘his name, whereby he shall be called, *Jehovah our*
 ‘*righteousness*.’ Hence the expression, ‘the name
 ‘of the Lord,’ throughout the Old Testament, is
 even by the Jewish Targumists themselves ac-
 knowledged to signify the *Messiah*; and accord-
 ingly our Saviour frequently assumes to himself
 this character; as in that petition of the Lord’s
 prayer *, ‘Hallowed be thy name:’ † ‘Father, glo-
 ‘rify thy name:’ ‡ ‘I have declared to them thy
 ‘name,’ &c. §

But to return to the application of the argu-
 ment, it seems evident, that our Lord, on the occa-
 sion mentioned, not only assumed this divine name,
 when he told his pursuers ‘*εγω εμι, I AM,*’ but like-
 wise emitted some splendid visible manifestation of
glory,

* Isaiah xliv. 24.

† xlix. 26.

‡ Jerem. xxiii. 5, 6. xxxiii. 16.

§ St Matth. vi. 9.

¶ St John xii. 28.

¶ St John xvii. 26.

7 Mr Hutchinson, with his usual penetration, hath said a great deal upon this subject, and has traced the derivation of שמים, *the heavens*, from this Hebrew word נש, *a name*. Whence he commonly reads the *names*, where we have the *heavens*; as in Psal. xix. 1. ‘The names exhibit the *chabod* *Jehovah*,’ *Jehovah the glory*, &c. But what I have already hinted, without any of his observations being adduced, is sufficient to prove the title, that the *Messiah* has to the sacred name *JEHOVAH*, or *I AM*.

glory, since we read, that on his saying ‘I AM,’ they ‘went back, and fell to the ground.’ His bare telling them, that he was Jesus of Nazareth, (as our translation, ‘*I am he,*’ would imply no more), could not be thought capable of producing such an amazing effect. But his so openly declaring his divinity, accompanied with some visible sign thereof, would very naturally throw them into confusion, especially when they thought on the errand, on which they were come. And there appears a satisfactory reason from his own words for his doing so at this time, in order to provide for the safety of his disciples, and give them an opportunity, if they saw fit, from the disorder of their enemies, to make their escape—‘if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way.’

Thus have I pointed out those immediate passages of the gospel, which, as I said, can scarcely be denied to have a reference to some *visible* and *apparent exhibitions* of *glory*, made by or upon the *person of Christ*. Nor is it to be doubted but exhibitions of this kind were frequently both *made* and *seen*, though not expressly mentioned. In the end of the first chapter of St John’s Gospel, on Nathanael’s declaring his belief, that Jesus was the Son of God, Jesus saith unto him, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, henceforth ye shall see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and
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'descending upon the Son of man.' This is certainly a promise of some glorious manifestation: perhaps the adverb 'απ' αὐτοῦ' (which properly signifies *henceforth*, or *from this time*, not barely *hereafter*) may be found to imply a frequency or repetition of such manifestations. And what was to be the nature of these manifestations, may be gathered from the history of Jacob's heavenly ladder¹, and from the expression of the *heavens opening*, which always portends something great². Yet there is no positive description given us of any such glorious manifestation as Christ here promises, except at his *baptism*, and again at his *transfiguration*. The first of these solemnities took place before his disciples were called, and consequently before this promise to Nathanael was made; and at the other there were none present but three, whom our Lord particularly selected, *James, Peter, and John*, so that Nathanael, to whom this promise was made, was not there. For which reason it will be granted, that there must have been frequent openings of heaven made publicly, in presence of all the apostles at least. Whether the passages referred to at the foot of the page³ may not be considered as pointing to something of this kind, I shall leave to every reader to judge for himself. Nor is it any just objection against this, that the evangelists have

¹ Gen. xxviii. 12.

² See Matth. iii. 16. Acts vii. 56. Acts x. 11.

³ St Matth. iv. 11. St Luke xxii. 43. xxiv. 4. Acts i. 10.

have not particularly recorded every such exhibition of glory. For St John, who seems to be most particular in relations of this sort, yet acknowledges¹ that 'there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, the world itself could not contain the books.' And as to that singularly splendid appearance of his ascension, which would have been a noble subject for our modern historians, on which to have exerted their eloquence and rhetorical powers, how simply and plainly does the inspired writer detail the matter? ² 'While they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.'

We live indeed in an age which will believe nothing, and be satisfied with nothing, without having what is thought a convincing reason assigned for it. To such reasoners, who pay so little deference to the virtue of *faith*, it may in the present case be answered, that, although Jesus saw proper at some times, and on certain occasions, to shew himself God by visible emanations of *glory*, yet, as the design of his incarnation was to suffer and die for *men*, it was not expedient that his *glory* should make a constant and perpetual residence upon his person, or appearance to the people, as was done between the cherubim in the Mosaic tabernacle, and in the temple of Solomon; because
thereby

¹ St John xxi. 25.

² Acts i. 9.

thereby the end of his incarnation would have been disappointed.; as it is not to be thought that the Jews would have persecuted to death *one*, in whom they saw so openly and daily the *Shechinah* of their fathers abiding. And hence it is, that on most occasions the *divinity in Christ withdrew*, as it were, and *retired out of sight*, that so the *humanity* might be left to the will of his enemies, for accomplishing the gracious purposes of the *divine wisdom*. Yet on the whole we have testimonies enough, left on record, of Jesus Christ's being not only the כבוד יהוה of the Old Testament, *the glory of the Lord*, but even of this כבוד or *glory* being exhibited to, and seen by, multitudes of spectators, and that too no less than *four times* expressly mentioned, besides several other indirect allusions, in the compass of little more than three years; which exhibitions, upon a computation, will I dare say be found to exceed the proportion of the appearances of the *glory* in the tabernacle to the Israelites, during their forty years wandering in the wilderness. The sum of all is, that, in the person of *Jesus Christ*, the *human flesh* was the *tabernacle*, or *instead of the tabernacle*, of the Jews; and the *Godhead or divine nature* was the *glory*, which in the Jewish tabernacle appeared between the cherubim, and now at last *shone forth from the tabernacle of Christ's body*. And hence He who in old times was called the **GLORY OF THE LORD**, as we have already seen, is now called the '**GOD OF GLORY**;' and the '**LORD OF GLORY**;'

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and

¹ Acts vii. 2.² 1 Cor. ii. 8. St James ii. 1.

and is distinguished from the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, who 'is called 'the Father of glory.' By this explication, as by a key, we shall be the better able to open up the meaning of those many passages throughout the New Testament, where mention is made of the *glory of Christ*, or of *glory* applied to *Christ*². And particularly it will help us to comprehend, in some measure, the beauty of that noble description of the New Jerusalem³, of which among other things it is said, that it has the *glory of God* abiding in it; and, 'I saw no temple 'therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the 'Lamb are the *temple* of it. And the city had no 'need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in 'it; for the GLORY OF GOD *did lighten* it, and the 'LAMB is the light thereof: and the nations of 'them that are saved shall walk in the *light* of it, 'and the kings of the earth do bring their *glory* 'into it.' All which is to the same purpose with what Simeon had said of the *Lamb* before—'a light 'to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.'

From these observations I hope it will be allowed, that the Bible in general affords sufficient proof of this position, that Jesus Christ was the
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¹ Ephes. i. 17.

² See the whole of the third chapter of 2 Cor. and ch. iv. 17. Phil. iii. 21. Colos. i. 27. 1 Tim. iii. 16.

³ Rev. xxi. 11. 22.

SHECHINAH or *appearance of glory* among the Jews ; and that, while he lived on earth, this *Shechinah* was to be *seen*, and consequently was a *visible* exhibition ; which was the first point of enquiry I undertook to discuss.

The second falls now to be examined, viz. ' Whether, from any thing said in scripture, any discoveries can be made, wherein it was that this *Shechinah* existed, or after what manner it was displayed.' In this particular, it must indeed be owned, that the scripture is not so clear and express, as that we can positively say, in what manner such a display was made. Yet upon consulting some texts, carefully attending to the import of them by themselves, and comparing them with others of a like import, I make no doubt but some light may be thrown even on this subject ; which, if not sufficient to discover the foundation on which to build an article of faith, will at least be useful in assisting our devout meditations on the method of our redemption, and person of our *Redeemer*. In pourtraying the person of the blessed *Jesus* as *man*, (for none pretend to delineate him as *God*), the universal practice among artists, ancient and modern, has been to encircle his head with an *arch*, designed to resemble an arch of *light*, and this is commonly called a GLORY. It will not, I believe, be easy to fix upon the time when this practice commenced ; but, that there has been some foundation at first, on which to ground such a practice,

as is the case with all other general modes and practices, will not I presume be denied : And it is not improbable, that it might have taken its rise from the scripture-account of the covenant, that God established with Noah after the flood¹; where, as a token or symbol of God's mercy to the earth, he says, ' I do set *my bow in the cloud*, and it shall ' be for a token of a *covenant* between *me* and the ' *earth*.' This bow in the cloud we call a *rainbow* ; and the natural cause, by which it is produced, I have no occasion to investigate ; it being sufficient for my purpose, that God Almighty, who best knows the nature and design of it, challenges a peculiar title to it, and claims it as his *own special property*. He calls it *MY BOW*, which must imply a great deal more than that this bow is the bare production of nature. It seems to me to imply, as if such a bow were to be a symbol, or some kind of representation of God—of the Jehovah, who covenanted to become man, confirming this covenant to Noah ; and who, we have seen, was the *second person* in *Jehovah*, or *THE WORD*. The subject of this everlasting covenant was *mercy*, and to it, at this time, was annexed a gracious promise never to destroy again the whole world with a flood, which promise is made *typical* of the *mercy* to be extended to mankind by *Jehovah the Redeemer*, as the prophet expresses it², ' With everlasting kindness will ' I have *mercy* on thee, saith Jehovah thy Redeemer ;

¹ Gen. ix. 13.

² Isaiah liv. 8, 9.

‘er ; for this is as the waters of Noah unto me ;
 ‘for, as I have sworn, that the waters of Noah
 ‘should no more go over the earth, so have I
 ‘sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor
 ‘rebuke thee :’ to which also St Peter alludes, in
 these words’, ‘While the ark was preparing, where-
 ‘in few, that is, eight persons, were saved from
 ‘water ; the like figure whereunto, even baptism,
 ‘doth now save us, by the resurrection of Jesus
 ‘Christ.’ That this *bow* of God was in the clouds
before the flood can hardly be supposed, if what has
 been said be true, that *before* the flood there was
 no rain ; and indeed the purpose of setting it there
 at the flood, for *the symbol of a covenant*, seems to
 say, that it had *not* been there before. It is evi-
 dent, however, that this *sacred bow*, (which *I* may
 very well call so, since *God* calls it *his bow*), was
 set up so early as the flood, to be a symbol of a
Berith or covenant, בְּרִיתִי, says God, ‘*my covenant*,’
 as he had called the bow קֶשֶׁתִּי, ‘*my bow*’.* Con-
 sequently

* 1 St Peter iii. 20.

² The word בְּרִית, translated *covenant*, properly signifies, a *purifier*, something that was to be cut off, and is rather the sacrifice of the covenant, (as all ancient covenants were made over sacrifice), than the covenant itself. In this light, בְּרִית is the name of Christ *the Messiah*, the great sacrifice of the covenant, the purifier, who was to be cut off, &c. So the קֶשֶׁת, the bow, being by God made a token of the covenant, ought to be understood as a symbol of the בְּרִית, which God had promised to establish with Noah, Gen. vi. 18. the בְּרִית of God, which was promised to be with Abraham, Gen. xvii. 4. compared with Gen. xii. 2, 3. as illustrated by St Paul, Gal. iii. 16. that everlasting בְּרִית, in which

quently it was a type of *Christ the Messiah*, by whom a general salvation was to come; not only from a flood of water, but from the more terrible flood of God's wrath. And, that this belief of the *bow* being a *symbol* of *Jehovah* the *second person* was handed down from Noah's time through succeeding generations; may be gathered from the pagan corruption of making their God *Apollo*, the son of their chief deity *Jupiter*, the *god* of the *bow*.; This *Apollo* was *god* of the *sun* too, which we have already seen to have been an eminent type of Christ; and the *god* of *physic*, which title belongs properly to Christ the Saviour, who is the *physician of souls*. So by attributing to this *god* of the *sun* and *physic* the *bow*, (which, though of another use than the bow in the cloud, is yet in figure the same), it would appear that the heathens had a tradition at first of such a *bow* being sacred to, and a symbol of, the *Son of God*, at its first institution. To this it may likewise be added, that, as they made one *son-god* the *god of the bow*, so they made the *bow* itself a *goddess*, whom the Greeks called *Iris*, and who, they fancied, was the messenger (or ἀγγελος—angel) of their superior deities. In these perverted imaginations may there not be traced some vestiges of the

which David so much rejoices, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. compared with Psalm lxxxix. 3. 28. 34. and with Isaiah lv. 3. as applied by St Paul, Acts xiii. 22, 23, 24. In these passages, the Messiah, or Christ, as he is expressly named, Ps. lxxxix. 51. is pointed to; and this will serve to strengthen the observation, that the bow in the cloud, by being a token of the covenant, was a type or symbol of Christ the Berith בְּרִית.

the מַלְאָכִים, or '*angel of the Lord*,' as we translate it, in the patriarchal times, who, as the holy patriarchs worshipped him, could not be a *created being*; and who, as it was generally believed that God himself could not be *seen*, must have been *Jehovah* under some *visible exhibition*? And not only so, but from the heathen application of the *bow* to *Iris* and *Apollo*, may it not at least be supposed, that this *bow* had been in the patriarchal times the usual *exhibition*, by which the מַלְאָכִים, *Jehovah the angel or sent one*, manifested himself to the world?

This is not the only ancient scripture-truth corrupted by heathen additions, deviations, and compositions. The doctrine of the Trinity has been divided into three distinct gods, *Jupiter*, *Neptune*, and *Pluto*. The incarnation, or the *Word's* assuming flesh, is to be found in the well-known stories of their gods descending and mixing with earthly women, whence sprung their heroes and half deities, as *Hercules*, *Bacchus*, &c. The redemption of the world by the death of the Messiah, (which, as we have seen, was promised immediately after the fall), gave rise to the *sacrifices* of *human victims*, so much in use among the several more ancient nations: and so it fared with many other mysteries of scriptural institution. Some learned men have accordingly employed their talents, to very good purpose, in searching for the gold of truth among the rubbish of both Jewish and pagan traditions; since throughout the whole of the Old Testament

tament, God Almighty, the true *Jehovah Aleim*, challenges to himself these abused titles of Deity, and vindicates them from the gross and carnal ideas, under which idolaters had debased them.

As to what I have advanced about the *bow* in the cloud in particular, it is not from heathen tradition only, that we are to discover its having been an exhibition of the *מלכות*, but we have likewise two *inspired* writers, that seem to direct us to this idea. The prophet Ezekiel, in his description of this *cherubic* apparition¹, after having mentioned the appearance of the likeness of a *man* upon the throne, above the *cherubim*, adds, ‘as the appearance of the *bow* that is in the cloud, (*הקשת בענן*) the very expression used by Moses²) so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the *כבודיה* of *JEHOVAH THE GLORY*.’ And almost in the same language, St John writes thus³, ‘A throne was set in heaven, and there was a sitter upon the throne; (whom the Psalmist before called *ישב-הכרובים* the *sitter between the cherubim*) and the sitter was to look upon, like a jasper and a sardine stone, and round about the throne there was a *rainbow*.’ St John calls it expressly, as the heathen goddess was called, *Iris*. I know it will be said, that both those of Ezekiel and St John are but visionary descriptions,

¹ Ezek. i. 28.

² Gen. ix. 13. 14. 16.

³ Rev. iv. 2.

scriptions, and cannot therefore be drawn into proof for realities. But yet it will be granted, that even these visions had an aspect towards something of reality; and *this*, it would seem, has been the constant and universal opinion respecting this matter; as appears from what I before said of the universally prevalent custom of encircling the head of Jesus with an arch of glory. I am neither to justify nor condemn this practice; let them justify it, who are required to do so, and let it be condemned by those, who are afraid of paying too much regard to the Saviour. The universality of the custom, supported by these few scripture-texts which I have adduced, seems to prove that there is an old tradition for the practice; and, as I have already shewn that there certainly were frequent *visible exhibitions of the glory of Christ*, when he was upon earth, I do not see that the scriptures of the New Testament say any thing against these exhibitions being in the appearance of the *Iris* or *bow* in the cloud. That he did appear at certain times with an extraordinary light or brightness, is expressly mentioned. At the transfiguration 'his face did *shine* as the sun'. All, that St Paul saw of him at his conversion, was 'a *shining* of a *light* from heaven'. Hence St John, in his account of the divine word³, says, 'he was the *light* of men, the *true light*, which was in the world; and the

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¹ St Matth. xvii. 2.² Acts ix. 3.³ St John i. 5. 9.

‘ world knew him not.’ It is from the likeness of the *bow* in the *cloud*, as appearing about the throne, &c. that the prophet Daniel ¹ had the vision of one *like the Son of man* coming with the *clouds* of heaven, &c.; and that our Lord’s ascension is described by a *cloud* receiving him out of the disciples’ sight². So his coming again to judgement is said to be coming in the *clouds* of heaven, with power and great glory³. I shall only adduce one passage more as applicable to this purpose, and it is this⁴, ‘ For God, who commanded the *light* to *shine* ‘ out of darkness, hath *shined* in our hearts, to ‘ give the *light* of the knowledge of the GLORY OF ‘ GOD, in the FACE of JESUS CHRIST.’ That the apostle’s meaning may in some measure be comprehended, let us look back to the whole of the preceding chapter, particularly to the seventh verse, where, speaking of the delivery of the law, he observes, that the children of Israel at that time could not stedfastly behold the *face* of Moses, because of the *glory* of his *face* ⁵. Hence the apostle’s design is, upon comparing the law of Moses with the gospel of Christ, to give the gospel the preference, from this particular consideration, among
many

¹ Dan. vii. 13.

² Acts i. 9.

³ See St Mat. xxiv. 30. where there is express mention made of seeing the clouds as the symbol of the Son of man, Acts i. 11. Rev. i. 7. which in other places is called, as by a parallel description, ‘ coming in ‘ his glory,’ St Mark xxv. 31. ‘ with his mighty angels in flaming fire,’ 2 Thes. i. 7. &c. brightness of his coming, 2 Thes. ii. 8, &c.

⁴ 2 Cor. iv. 6.

⁵ Exod. xxxiv. 29—35.

many others, that the *glory* of *Christ* was greater than the *glory* of *Moses*¹; and having taken no notice how the *face* of *Moses* did *shine* with *glory*, in prosecution of the same argument he observes, that *our* religion is not defective in this point either; for we have got the knowledge of the *glory* of *God* in the *face* (προσωπον, the same word in both places) of *Jesus Christ*. May not the relation of this circumstance, concerning *Moses*², be made use of to illustrate the manner of the *glory* of *God* being in the *face* of *Jesus Christ*? and if so, will not this help to explain what is said of him by the evangelist *St Luke*³, ‘that he increased in wisdom ‘and stature, and in *favour*,’ or *gracefulness*, ‘before ‘God and man;’ and by the psalmist before, concerning him⁴, ‘thou art *fairer* than the children of ‘men?’ Which character, were it necessary, might be easily reconciled with what seems to be said to to the contrary⁵, ‘he hath no form, nor comeliness, ‘and when we shall see him, there is no *beauty* that ‘we should desire him;’ for this description, given by the prophet, is rather by way of expostulation, or complaint of the *blindness* and *unreasonableness* of the people in rejecting the Messiah, than to be considered as a correct and formal description of his person. That the blessed *Jesus*, when upon earth, was looked upon to be a comely and ami-

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able

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 8, 9, 10, 11.² Exod. xxxiv. 29—35.³ St Luke ii. 52.⁴ Psalm xlv. 2.⁵ Isa. liii. 2.

able man, even by his enemies; and that the description of the *psalmist* rather than that of the *prophet* may be said to have belonged to him, we learn from the account given of him to the senate of Rome, by Publius Lentulus, the Roman governor of Judea; which account has been received as authentic by good judges and where, among many other particulars, he tells them, '*he was the fairest of the sons of men.*'

These several passages I have collected into one view, not so much to affirm any thing positively on this head, (which I am aware would be liable to much objection, and might even give offence), as to shew that the scriptures have not left us altogether in the dark as to the knowledge of the GLORY of *Christ*, although they have not expressly determined in what particular manner the exhibition of his *glory* was made. And I shall be extremely glad if my application of these to this purpose shall be well received, or be of any use to such devout christians as delight to meditate on so very interesting and agreeable a subject.

With this hope I shall proceed to the third point proposed for discussion, which was to enquire, '*Whether any symbols of this SHECHINAH be continued in the christian church now, and what these symbols are?*' In this enquiry, I shall adhere to the method, which I have all along followed, of advancing nothing but upon the authority of scripture,

ture, without taking in the assistance of ancient fathers, or modern commentators, which would carry me beyond the limits of my present design. Let it be observed, then, that the excellency of the gospel, and of the œconomy of the christian church, as founded by Jesus Christ, is derived from the following *promise*, made and confirmed with an *oath*, to him¹, ‘The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, thou art a *priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec* :’ which promise is nobly enlarged upon and explained by St Paul². That Melchisedec was the very Christ, the *second person* in Jehovah, is a truth which, as we have already seen, is clearly and undeniably proved by St Paul, in the seventh chapter of his epistle to the Hebrews. So that the expression, ‘the ORDER OF MELCHISEDEC,’ (עֲלִידִבְרִיתִי מֶלְכִּי-צֶדֶק in Hebrew, by the Septuagint and St Paul *κατα την ταξιν Μελχισεδεκ*), will signify an order instituted, appointed, or set up by *Melchisedec*, that is, by *Christ*, ‘a certain order, form, or regulation, to be the rule or model of the christian priesthood for ever. Agreeably to this rule it is, that St Paul appoints³ all things to be done with a view to a *good scheme*, (as *ευσχημονως* signifies), and (*κατα ταξιν*) according to some certain ordination, regulation and institution, which is the true and full meaning of the word *ταξίς*. Now, that we may know

¹ Psalm cx. 4.

² Heb. v. 6. and ch. vii. throughout.

³ 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

know what this order or institution of Melchisedec was, we must go back to his first appearance under that name '—' And Melchisedec, king of Salem, 'brought forth *bread and wine*, and He was the '*priest of the most high God.*' That this 'bringing forth of bread and wine' constituted a sacrificial act, was the universal doctrine of the primitive fathers *Cyprian, Augustine, Chrysostom, &c.* and has been fully shewn by many learned modern writers on the subject; as by other irrefragable arguments, so particularly from the connexion of what follows, that he *was priest of the Most High*, and that in that character he *blessed Abram*. Why he made choice of *bread and wine*, we are not to enquire. In matters of divine dispensation, it becomes us, with all humility, to acquiesce in the divine wisdom, without seeking to penetrate into the reasons thereof. The account is not given in the way of insinuation or inference; it is an open direct affirmation, that *Melchisedec*, or *Christ*, at this time EXHIBITED himself to *Abram* with BREAD AND WINE. Of this exhibition we have no further revival expressly on record, till the time of *Christ's* appearing in our *flesh*, when, as the evangelists record it², 'he 'took bread, and having blessed and broken it, he 'said, *this is my body*; and so likewise of the cup, '*this is my blood of the New Testament*,' or the *new covenant in my blood*. The bread and wine brought

¹ Gen. xiv. 18.

² St Matth. xxvi. 26. St Mark xiv. 22. St Luke xxii. 19. 1 Cor. xi. 23.

brought forth by Melchisedec were symbols of his *humanity*, by which he was manifested to Abram, as he could not be seen in his *divinity*: consequently they exhibited his *body*, and made *him visible* to the patriarch; upon which account it is, that Jesus tells us¹, ‘Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and ‘he saw it, and was glad.’ With a view to this original *exhibition* of the *second person in Jehovah* by *bread and wine*, the same Jehovah in the days of his *humanity*, (which was the *day* Abraham saw), did again institute the same Melchisedecian elements to the same end, to *exhibit his body*, the tabernacle of his *glory*; and thus continue to be the symbols of his *presence* to the church, as long as it was to abide on earth; in which sense he assures his apostles², ‘lo, I am with you ALWAYS, even unto ‘the end of the world.’

Now, as all the account we have of Melchisedec’s priesthood was, his ‘bringing forth bread and wine, ‘and *blessing Abram*;¹ and as our high priest is called of God a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, it follows, that this priesthood consists in doing the same thing that Melchisedec did: that, as Melchisedec brought forth *bread and wine* to *bless Abram*, so Christ was to appoint *bread and wine* to be the sacraments or symbols of *blessing* to mankind, by the *remission* of their *sins*; and that, as Christ is said to be *a priest for ever after the order*
of

¹ St John viii. 56.

² St Matth. xxviii. 20.

of *Melchisedec*, so this order of *Melchisedec* is to be explained no other way, but that Christ was to make such an exhibition of himself to his church for ever, that is, as St Matthew gives our Lord's words, 'to the end of the world.' If the bread and wine, which *Melchisedec* brought forth, were for a symbolical use, to *manifest Jehovah the word to Abram*, in order that the patriarch might *see his day*, it is not to be doubted, but that the *bread and wine* brought forth by *Him*, who is 'a priest for ever after the order of *Melchisedec*,' answers the *same end*, and serves to *exhibit* the same *Jehovah* to us. If it be asked, why this exhibition of *Melchisedec* ceased from that time, and was not kept up under the subsequent ages of the Jewish church? St Paul will satisfy this scruple '—'Wherefore then,' says he, 'serveth the law? It was added because of the 'transgressions, till the seed should come, to whom, 'or in whom the promise was made.' And again *, 'Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster, to bring 'us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.' These symbols of bread and wine, brought forth by *Melchisedec*, were to be strengthened and corroborated by *more lively and sensible exhibitions*, on purpose to preserve the Israelitish church from the many idolatries of the powerful nations round about her; and God in his wisdom might see proper to vary the methods of *exhibiting* himself according to the change of times and circumstances, 'till the 'fulness

* Gal. iii. 19.

2 ver. 24.

their law was not to be a *standing æconomy*, but only to prepare them for, and at last to give place to, *one better and more perfect*. Yet this law was a divine institution, and the Jews had many great and valuable privileges: 'To them,' says St Paul¹, 'per-
'tained the adoption, and the *δοξα*, the *cherubic glory*, and the *covenants*, and the giving of the law, 'and the true worship, and the promises,' &c. These privileges, when Christ came in the flesh, were *not* abolished; 'Christ came not to destroy 'the law, but to fulfil it'; and if to fulfil all the rest, then certainly to fulfil this particular privilege of the glory too. But after what manner, you will ask? By *exhibiting* it, I answer, *in his own person, when he was upon earth*, as we have observed already, and *by leaving with his church*, upon his ascension, *certain elements*, (which had been brought forth and instituted to the same sacred purpose before), to be the *symbols of his Shechinah*, or *glorious presence*, to the Christian church; as the GLORY JEHOVAH between the cherubim had been to the Jewish, until his second coming again *in glory* in the *clouds* of heaven: And these *symbols* are the ELEMENTS OF BREAD AND WINE, which Jesus Christ, the *Word* made *flesh*, the *Melach Jehovah* (מלך יהוה) of the old patriarchs, the *Melchisedec* of Abram, the *glory Jehovah* (כבוד יהוה) of Moses and the Jews, &c. did, by the authority of his *eternal priesthood*, consecrate to be the sacrament of the *presence*, and of the *blessings of grace and pardon*
to

¹ Rom. ix. 4.² St Matth. v. 17.

to all christians in all ages. Whether any of his transactions, while he was on earth, will be found to have an aspect forward to these sacred symbols, before the institution of the eucharistic *sacrament*, I will not venture positively to affirm; tho', upon attentively looking into some passages of the gospels, such a conclusion may, in my opinion, very justly and naturally be drawn. The *daily bread*, which we are taught to pray for¹, has been by most of the early fathers interpreted to this sense, to signify the *supersubstantial* bread of the eucharist, which in this *day* of our pilgrimage upon earth, or, as it is expressed by St Paul², this 'day of christianity,' we ought above all things to seek after. To the same purpose is that long conversation, which Christ had with the Jews³, concerning the *living bread*, the *bread that came down from heaven*, the *true bread*, of which if a man eat, he shall live for ever, &c.

And as for the other *symbol of wine*, I make no doubt but that the miracle at the marriage-feast in Cana of Galilee⁴ will be acknowledged to have a view to it. For, from several considerations, it seems evident, that our blessed Lord at that time had something further, and of more importance in design, than merely to heighten the enjoyment of a nuptial banquet. The guests had drank some before, as may be inferred from what is said, 'וְשָׁרְיָהוּ
'בַּיַּיִת' (Davidson)

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¹ St Matth. vi. 11.

² Heb. iv. 7, 8.

³ St John vi. 27—63.

⁴ St John ii.

‘σεντ’ οινε—the wine falling short,’ which implies that there had been wine already used; and even, when it failed, it could have been supplied from the neighbourhood, as Cana was not far from Bethsaida, and as wine was a common beverage in those countries. It was not then, as it was afterwards in the wilderness, that the multitude could not be provided by human means, without the intervention of Almighty power; since here they were in an inland and frequented place, and might have had their demands satisfied perhaps from no greater distance than the next town. And if the philosophic observation about nature be true, much more will it hold with respect to providence, that it ‘does nothing in vain.’ Besides, the conversation between Jesus and his mother, on this occasion, seems to carry with it some weight, as if she at this time expected some great and solemn thing, and looked for the *exhibition* of some glorious manifestation of power. This indeed is not to be doubted, from what we are elsewhere told of Mary, ‘that she kept all these sayings, and pondered them in her heart,’ her son having held frequent conversations with her about his doing his Father’s business. And to mention no more particulars, the account given of this mysterious transaction by St John, deserves consideration. ‘This beginning of *miracles* did Jesus,’ &c. The Greek word σημεῖον, which is here translated *miracles*, properly signifies *signs*, by which
some-

1 St Luke ii. 51.

something is demonstrated. Thus it is used by Moses¹, 'And let them be *εἰς σημεῖα* for *signs*,' &c. according to the Septuagint. So again², the *bow in the cloud* is said to be *σημεῖον*, 'a sign or token of the covenants, &c. So likewise the two miracles recorded by Moses³, are called *σημεῖα*, *signs*. And in the New Testament the word is used in the same sense. Thus⁴ we find the Jews asking *τί σημεῖον*, *what sign* 'shewest thou, &c. And again⁵, 'Jesus said, except ye see *σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα*, *signs and wonders*, &c. In many other places, it is distinguished from *miracles* and *wonders*, as⁶, 'Jesus of Nazareth, a man 'approved of God by miracles, wonders, and *σημεῖα*, *signs*,' &c.

This transaction, then, at Cana, being made the *αρχή*, the *beginning*, the *source*, *principle*, chief of SIGNS, to be exhibited by Jesus, carries with it a particular signification, and may well be interpreted to have a mysterious or symbolical meaning; especially as connected with 'what follows, that by this *beginning of signs*, he 'MANIFESTED FORTH,' *exhibited*, *displayed* his *Shechinah* or *glory*, as we have remarked above. However, whether it be universally allowed or not, that this affair had any such symbolical aspect, (as some no doubt for certain reasons

¹ Gen. i. 14.

² Gen. ix. 13.

³ Exod. iv. 8.

⁴ St John ii. 18.

⁵ St. John iv. 48.

⁶ Acts ii. 22.

⁷ See also Acts ii. 43. iv. 30. viii. 13. Rom. xv. 19. Heb. ii. 4. &c.

reasons will refuse such an interpretation), it is enough for us, that the blessed Jesus, before he left this world, did set apart the patriarchal elements of *bread and wine* to be his *body and blood*, that is to *exhibit his presence* to christians; as Melchisedec did to Abram; and not only so, but gave commission to his apostles, and (as is agreed upon by all parties) to their successors, to continue the same *exhibition*, ‘TO DO THIS,’ that is, to make the same consecration, in the same manner, by *blessing and giving thanks*, of the same elements of *bread and wine*; and that to be a perpetual *display* of his *presence*, *ὡς τὴν ἑμὴν ἀνάμνησιν*, (they are our Lord’s own words’), ‘to be my commemoration,’ or *symbol of remembrance*, that symbol, by which I am to be always present with you.

I do not propose at this time, as it is not the principal part of my present design, to enter into any disquisition concerning this mysterious sacrament; and I hope I have said nothing contrary either to the scripture accounts or primitive belief respecting it. Thus far I may be permitted, and shall take leave to say, that no point of christianity has been the subject of more debate and controversy than the sacrament of the eucharist has been: Some requiring all christians, under pain of damnation, to stretch their faith concerning it to the exalted pitch of their own superstitious creeds: others

others again sinking it as low as the contrary extreme can reach, and bringing it down to a bare memorial. Were we to enquire into the causes of these differences, they would be found to proceed entirely from a superficial view of the institution, and from men's being at no pains to compare it (as being what we may call the *chief, nay distinguishing ornament of the christian dispensation*) with other divine appointments under the patriarchal and Jewish œconomy. Taking it in this light, in which I have represented it, as corresponding 'to the order of Melchisedec,' which we have seen consisted in *bringing forth bread and wine, and blessing Abram, and consequently being an exhibition of Jehovah the Word, God manifested in the flesh, will not this establish the truth of Christ's presence, not properly in the sacrament, but in the church by the sacrament; a presence though not bodily, yet real and true, not by annihilating the substance of the elements, and transubstantiating them into that very body, which was taken from the virgin, but by the Divinity inhabiting, dwelling, residing upon them, as he inhabited the cherubim at the east of Paradise¹, as he stood upon Jacob's ladder², as he dwelt between the cherubim in the tabernacle³, &c. as he was seen by Ezekiel standing over the cherubim⁴, and by St John sitting upon a throne⁵. From all which it appears that this PRE-*

SENCE

¹ Gen. iii. 24.² Gen. xxviii. 13.³ 2 Sam. vi. 2.⁴ Ezek. x. 18.⁵ Rev. iv. 2.

SENCE, SHECHINAH, or GLORY, is still with the *christian church* in the sacred symbols of *bread and wine*; and, that it was believed to be so in the pure ages of antiquity, appears from those many liturgies which go under the name of St James, St Clement, St Chrysostom, &c. which, though they have been condemned by a few among us of a different belief, have again and again been proved to be genuine and purged from all corruptions and interpolations of designing men.

It may be observed likewise, to strengthen this interpretation, that, as I have already remarked, the patriarchal altars were for the most part built in those places where *Jehovah was seen* by some visible exhibition; so that, in the history of these times, the *presence of the Lord* always deserved an altar, and an altar always implied the *presence of the Lord*. It is well known, that the christian church, from its first institution, had an altar; '*We have an altar*, says St Paul', '*from which they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle.*' If then the christian church has an altar, is there any good reason to be assigned, why we should not believe, that *we have the divine presence too*? Should it be objected, that God is *not seen* by us now, as He was seen in the patriarchal times; St Paul shall answer the objection, who tells us², '*that we walk by faith, not by sight.*' Besides, the patriarchal times were but the infancy of
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¹ Heb. xiii. 10.

² 2 Cor. v. 7.

of the *then church*, during which God was pleased to make frequent manifestations of himself, on purpose to confirm and strengthen his servants in the midst of the many temptations they were under to idolatry. But, when once the church was *settled* under the Mosaic economy, and God had, as we may say, *fixed his residence* between the cherubim within the holy place, then these manifestations in a great measure ceased, and God was from thenceforth seldom *seen*, except by the high priest *once every year in a symbolical manner, by the Shechinah or glory between the cherubim*. The same is to be said for the *christian church*, that, while in her early days she was exposed to enemies on all hands, and had both the power of the heathen emperors, and the learning of their philosophers, as well as the malicious obstinacy of the Jews to grapple with, *then* God did bless several of his faithful servants with *extraordinary exhibitions* of his *glory*, as he did to St Stephen¹, to St Paul², to Cornelius³, to St Peter⁴. But, when these dangerous trials were removed, and the christian faith universally propagated, and at last established by the civil sanction, *then* the *divine presence* was not to be looked for, and is not now to be looked for, but in the way of God's own divine appointment, and under the *sacred symbols* of *bread and wine*, set apart and instituted for that very purpose by Christ himself.

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Perhaps

¹ Acts vii. 55.² Acts ix. 3.³ Acts x. 3. 11.⁴ Acts xii. 7.

Perhaps another objection against what I have advanced, may be drawn from this circumstance, that in scripture and primitive writings we read of a *table*, in a sacramental sense, as well as an *altar*. This I know to be truth; and I also know that its reconciliation with my hypothesis is most easy; especially when it is remembered, that the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper is to be viewed in two lights. In one light it is something that *God does to us*, and something *that we do to God*; it is the symbol of the *divine presence to us*; and it is *our offering to God*, in which respect the use of an ALTAR is apposite, and the appellation proper: but then, in another light, as we are allowed, nay invited, and called upon to partake of these *symbolical offerings*, by eating and drinking in this sense, what was before called an ALTAR may justly be called a TABLE, and not only so, but even THE TABLE OF THE LORD, as it is by his invitation that we have the honour to repair thither, and as it is of *his* symbols, of *elements made sacramental by HIS blessing and presence*, that we have the privilege to partake. This might be farther explained both from scripture and primitive authority, if my design required it: and it is by thus understanding the sacrament, that the promiscuous, at least the seemingly promiscuous use of ALTAR and TABLE, is to be accounted for. Nor will it be any good cause of quarrel against us for using an *altar* in this sacrament, as if we thereby symbolised with Jews and heathens; since the same objection will hold against the admission

mission of *tables*, the *Jews* having had a *table* of shew-bread, and the *heathens* their *tables* before their images ¹.

From what has now been said, this may at last be drawn as the result of the third point under enquiry, that, since according to St Paul's most ample and excellent reasoning upon the subject ², our High Priest 'is now entered into heaven itself, 'there to appear in the *presence* of God for us,' he has left with us *certain symbols of his presence*, corresponding with his *Shechinah* or *glorious presence* among the Jews, and that these symbols are the *bread and wine* in the eucharist, which, by virtue of this *divine presence*, become his *body* and *blood* to the *christian church*; and that, in consequence of their becoming such, this venerable sacrament is the GLORY of the christian worship, and the great ornament of our religion, by which we are more immediately admitted into the *presence of God*, and by which we may be said 'to come before his 'presence with thanksgiving, *ευχαριστία*, bowing down 'and kneeling,' as we are required to do, 'before 'the Lord our Maker.'

Before dismissing this head, it seems incumbent on me to observe, that if the *priesthood* 'after the 'order of *Melchisedec*' be more excellent than the

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Aaronic

¹ See Isa. lrv. 11. Ezek. xxiii. 41. 1 Cor. x. 21.

² Heb. viii. ix. x.

Aaronic priesthood, and if no man durst take the honour upon him of the *Aaronic* priesthood, 'but he 'that was called of God, as was Aaron'; much less ought any person to usurp or seize to himself the office of *Melchisedec's* priesthood, unless he be called to it by *Melchisedec's* order: And if *Corah* and his company met with so signal and sudden a punishment for invading but a part of *Aaron's* office, 'of 'how much sorer punishment shall they be thought 'worthy,' as *St Paul* argues in a like case², who dare thrust themselves, without any call, order, or commission, into the ministry of the christian priesthood, and will take upon them to consecrate the symbols of the divine presence, and to stand as priests between God and the people? It is no wonder that such unruly invaders of the priesthood should do what they can to bring the sacrament of the divine presence into contempt, and should refuse to appear in any posture of adoration before it, since they cannot but know that *God* will not vouchsafe to be present in it, but in the way and method of his own appointment.

This indeed is a separate point of controversy, and I shall insist no further on it here. I hope I have by this time, if not sufficiently, at least in some measure, vindicated the christian religion from the Jewish charge of lameness and defectiveness in this particular privilege of the *Shechinah*, and have

¹ Heb. v. 4.

² Heb. x. 29.

have shewn, that, as Jesus Christ was the *Shechinah* or glory of the Lord in the Jewish tabernacle and temple, so in the days of his *flesh* did he frequently make visible exhibitions of this *Shechinah* or *glory* from the tabernacle of the *humanity*; and before his ascension into heaven, instituted the elements of *bread and wine* to be the symbols of his *Shechinah* or *glorious presence* with his church to the end of the world. I shall only beg the reader's patience a little longer, until I point out two or three observations, that seem naturally to arise from part of the arguments adduced in the course of this enquiry. The first is, that by this doctrine of the *Shechinah*, or glory of the Lord, *rightly understood*, we shall be enabled to form some adequate idea of the manner of the *original formation* of man, revealed to us as being 'in the image and after the likeness of God.' It has been matter of much labour to ascertain whether this language is to be applied to the *body*, or to what we call the *soul of man*. The hitherto general notion has been, that this description can only belong to the *soul*, or rather to the *spirit*, as God is a *spirit*: and, as 'the image of God' must be a spiritual image, it is an expression deemed unsuitable to the body of man. But here this difficulty will occur, that properly speaking there cannot be said to be any *likeness* of a spirit; since a *likeness* or *image* is something (especially when applied to man) that must come under the
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cognizance of our senses. Nay more, we have a separate account of the formation of the *soul* or animal part'—¹ God breathed into man's nostrils the 'breath of life, and he became a living *soul*.' And as to the *spiritual* or *divine part*, it does not appear that there is any formal or distinct account, when or how it was infused, unless something in reference to it may be gathered from that order of God to man ², to have dominion over the creatures, &c. Perhaps the dominion here spoken of, may signify *precedence, preference, superiority* of dignity, or something of that kind, which principally belongs to man as a reasonable creature, and endued with a heavenly spirit. For, as to any other sort of dominion, such as power, property, superior strength, or the like, it is not said that man exercised it in that sense, even in a state of innocence; and since the fall, it is well known, that over the greatest part of the brute creation, this latter sort of dominion is entirely lost, though in the first respect it be still preserved.

But whether this be so or not, it does not seem that the *likeness* or '*image* of God' can properly be referred to the *spirit* of man. That however we may, in some measure, acquire a competent knowledge of this expression of revealed truth, we must consider, that the words, '*our image, our likeness,*
image

¹ Gen. ii. 7.

² Gen. i. 28.

‘*image of God*’¹; &c. are of the same import as the words, ‘*my bow, the Lord’s day, the Lord’s house,*’ &c. so frequent in scripture; that is to say, a *likeness set up or instituted* by God, as the *Bow, the Sabbath,* &c. were. For, to call it a *likeness*, by which God can be resembled, or to which he may be compared, or according to which any being may resemble him as God, will not I presume be affirmed. From what I have already said, and what has been more fully said by others, concerning the *cherubic exhibition*, it is plain that there was such an exhibition before the creation: and if the opinion of at least a majority of theological writers be admitted, viz. that the sin of the fallen angels was *pride* against *Christ*, and *envy* against the future happiness of man, it would seem that the cherubic exhibition, as representing the *incarnation* of one of the *Aleim*, or *divine persons*, and the *redemption* of man thereby, had been known to these angels. There is an expression made use of by St Peter², of which this seems to be the tendency, ‘*Which things,*’ meaning the œconomy of our salvation, ‘*the angels desire to look into.*’ And what St Paul says of this mystery of godliness³, ‘*seen of angels,*’ may no doubt bear such an interpretation. St Paul says also⁴, that ‘*this mystery,*’ i. e. the mystery of godliness, ‘*was hid in God* *απο τω αἰωνος* *from all ages,*’ and he calls the purpose of our salvation

‘*the*

¹ Gen. i. 26.² St Peter i. 12.³ 1 Tim. iii. 16.⁴ Ephes. iii. 9. ch. xi.

'the purpose of ages,' *תוֹר אֵלֵינוּ*, 'the eternal purpose:' In which sense is to be taken what our Saviour says of the kingdom *prepared* for his saints from the foundation of the world, i. e. before the foundations of the world were laid¹. From these, and many other places, it is to be believed that the *method* of our redemption was *concerted*, and *exhibitions* of it instituted, before the world was made. And as this method was to be by one of the ALEIM or divine persons becoming *man*, some *representation* of this *mystery* (as it is justly called by St Paul) would be concerted too. This we have seen was the design of the *cherubim*, which consisted not only of the *four cherubic faces*, but which, according to all the inspired descriptions of it, had likewise, to use the words of Ezekiel², *a likeness as the appearance of a man above the faces*; or, as Nebuchadnezzar saw, *a form like the Son of God*³.

This then is the *likeness* of the ALEIM, (that is, *the likeness set up by the ALEIM, by GOD*), in which man was made, '*the likeness above the cherubim*,' or, in Nebuchadnezzar's words, '*the form of the Son of God*.'

¹ St Matth. xxv. 34.

² Ezek. i. 20.

³ Dan. iii. 25. The word, in both these places, translated *likeness*, or *form*, is the same with the word for likeness in Genesis דְמוּת or דְמוֹת, and, as Mr Holloway observes in his '*Originals*,' vol. 1. p. 231. for its root has דָּמָה, to make or reduce to his *likeness*, and has an affinity with אָדָם, the proper name of the first man, and a common name in many places of scripture for *man*, especially in Ezekiel's description of the cherubim, and in those places where mention is made of the *Son of man*—בֶּן־אָדָם.

‘God.’ This is the only *image of God* of which we can have any notion; but having this notion or conception of it, we shall be enabled to comprehend the meaning of several expressions made use of by St Paul, otherwise in a great measure unintelligible; as where he calls Jesus Christ, ‘the *image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature*’; which is certainly spoken of his *humanity*, as we cannot call his *divinity* the ‘first-born of every creature;’ especially as the apostle seems in the same chapter to explain himself by mentioning his *blood*, the ‘*blood of his cross*’.¹ To the same purpose, he calls the Son not only ‘the *brightness of God’s glory*,’ but ‘the *express image of his person*’.² If Jesus Christ, then, be the *image of God, who cannot be seen*, if the first man was formed after this *image and likeness of God*, does it not follow, that *Jesus Christ* is the *pattern* after which the first man was formed—formed after the pattern of Christ’s *humanity*, since his *divinity* was invisible, and could neither be represented nor seen? In another place, St Paul calls man ‘the *image and glory of God* :’³ And we have seen before what is to be understood by the *glory of God*; so that the apostle might well bestow on man this description, as being at first made *after the pattern of him* who was the כבודיה, the GLORY OF JEHOVAH, or JEHOVAH THE GLORY: and accordingly, the wo-

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¹ Col. i. 15.² ver. 4.³ Heb. i. 3.⁴ 1 Cor. xi. 7.

man is, in that same verse, called 'the glory of the man,' as having been formed after man's likeness'; by which latter addition the apostle plainly restricts the meaning of the former to the body of man, which, from what has been said, appears to have been formed 'after the pattern of Christ the glory—the likeness above the cherubim,' who, we have seen, is called '*the image of the invisible God*,' and likewise the *glory of the Lord*.

From this belief no doubt it is, that the old patriarchs had such a care about the burying of their bodies after death; and even after idolatry had gained ground, to the destruction of some, and the corruption of all ancient traditions, yet still we find, among the more civilized heathens, an universal regard to decency in their funeral rites, which, one should think, must have proceeded from some notion of the honourable original, as well

¹ Perhaps this may enable us also to guess at the reason why the apostle forbids the man to 'cover his head,' because, by his formation, having *the likeness of the glory of God* stamped upon him, and particularly, as the description of the cherubim insinuates, about his *face or head*, he ought not in his prayers to bring any *covering* upon it, lest thereby he dishonour Christ, who, the apostle had said, ver. 3. is 'the head of every man,' and from whom every man derives that covering of glory given at the creation: Whereas he saith, 'a woman praying with an uncovered head dishonoureth the man who is her head,' in as far as she seems thereby to deny her being formed out of the *man*, and to claim an *original formation*, as well as man, after the likeness of *Christ the glory*. But whatever may be in this, it is certainly remarkable, that the apostle calls man '*the image and glory of God*;' and in the same sense, the woman '*the glory of the man*.'

well as future resurrection of the human body. Nay, St Paul says, in many places, 'that we are the 'temple of God'; that our 'bodies are members 'of Christ'; 'the temples of the Holy Ghost in us, 'whom we have 'of God'; 'therefore,' says he, 'glorify God in your body, as well as in your *spirit*, because they are both God's.' But if it be true, that *Jesus Christ* appeared so frequently in the ancient times in the likeness or similitude of *man*, perhaps it may be asked, to what purpose was his manifestation in the *flesh* afterwards? The answer is ready—it was to perfect, or, as he himself says³, to *finish* our *redemption* by dying for us, which could not be done without his *assuming* the substance of our *flesh*, as well as *our likeness*. He had on former occasions exhibited himself in such a way as could be seen by man, and that, as the scripture for the most part declares, in the *form of man*: now he was to *become very man*, to be made *like us* in every respect, in *substance* as well as *form*, in every thing, except in sin⁴. No doubt much might still be discovered, to strengthen this observation, in the volume of the book in which it is written of him, if people's curiosity led them to it; and as to the nature and origin of that heaven-

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³ 1 Cor. iii. 16.⁴ vi. 15.

3vi. 19.

4 vi. 25.

5 St John xix. 30.

⁶ See the account given of this dispensation by St Paul, Philippians ii. 5, &c. which will probably give light to, and also receive light from, what I have offered.

ly part of man, which we call his *spirit*, perhaps some account might be given of it also, if it belonged to the present subject. But I fear I have digressed too far already.—I shall therefore come to a conclusion, after having observed,

Secondly, That, from comparing together some particulars of what has been advanced, we shall be likewise assisted in conceiving a proper idea of the state of souls after death, and of the nature of our happiness, especially with respect to our bodies at the resurrection. As to the state of *souls*, or world of *spirits*, between death and judgement, it will be difficult to produce any passage of scripture, in which it is expressly said, that the souls of saints go immediately to heaven, according to the common notion of heaven. Our Saviour promises to the thief upon the cross, ‘this day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.’ We have seen what *Paradise* was, and what it was designed for; and, as from the account given of it in scripture, it seems to have been a place, or sacred inclosure, *separated* from the rest of the earth, (which is spoken of as distinct from Paradise), and, as there is not the least insinuation made, that it was destroyed by the flood with the rest of the earth, there is nothing in scripture to hinder, why the Paradise spoken of by our Saviour may not be believed to be the same with *that Paradise*, into which the Lord God put Adam. Even although the Paradise of our Saviour were to be taken metaphorically, yet as the use of the word directs us by analogy to what is said of the *first Paradise*,

radise, it will appear, that our Saviour's Paradise, in resemblance to that first Paradise, was an intermediate place, or *middle state*, between earth and heaven, between the *church militant* and *church triumphant*; in which *middle state*, the spirits of just men finished, or '*departed*,' as St Paul writes¹, enjoy 'the presence of Christ the Mediator of the *'new covenant,*' according to our Lord's promise², '*thou shalt be with me,*' that is, *in my company*, '*in Paradise.*' But, that such spirits at death went directly to heaven, was never established as a doctrinal point in the church, till the present popish custom of *praying to saints* was unhappily introduced; a practice not heard of till some centuries after Christ; and which would never have been heard of, had not men appeared of perverse minds, and innovating principles, forsaking the old truth, from a pride of introducing and establishing a new belief of their own. A much safer way surely it is to follow *antiquity*, where we find antiquity has followed scripture. In the present point we are taught to say, in words strictly scriptural, that at death we expect to be with our blessed Saviour in Paradise, that our bodies go to dust in the grave; that they shall be raised again, or restored at the last day. This restoration is to be effected by the same power, and in like manner as the resurrection of Christ's body was³, by '*the glory of the Father;*'

¹ Heb. xii. 23, 24.

² St Luke xxiii. 43.

³ Rom vi. 4.

‘Father;’ which, as we have again and again seen, is the second person in Jehovah.

But *lastly*, in respect of the resurrection, or second creation, as well as of the first formation of our bodies, ‘Christ the glory’ may properly be called, as he truly is ‘*ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ*’, ‘the beginning,’ the principle, ‘of the creation of God.’ There is, we know, to be a change wrought on our bodies, ‘a glorious change,’ as St Paul at large explains it²; making *one great part*, if not the principal part of that change to consist in *glory*—as, where he says, ‘the sufferings of this time are not to be compared with the *glory*, that shall be revealed,’ *ἀποκαλυφθῆναι*, uncovered, made visible, ‘in us’³. So again⁴, ‘our light afflictions,’ &c. ‘work out for us an exceeding and eternal *weight of glory*,’ and⁵, ‘the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ,’ he says, ‘shall change our vile body,’ literally the body of our humiliation, when by the fall it was subjected to corruption, ‘that it may become,’ in form, ‘like unto his glorious body,’ literally the body of his glory. In all which expressions, if we attend to the true and proper meaning of the word GLORY, as explained above, we shall be enabled to form a most comfortable idea of that grand and beautiful change; when
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¹ Rev. iii. 14.

² 1 Cor. xv. 35—58.

³ Rom. viii. 18.

⁴ 2 Cor. iv. 17.

⁵ Philip. iii. 21.

our bodies, now liable to diseases and death, shall be delivered from every tendency thereto, shall no longer be, as at present, a fleshy, tangible, dissolvable mass, full of carnal passions and affections, but shall be '*like the form of the Son of God*;' shall be spiritual bodies, clothed with a *δόξα*, a GLORY: and it is by this assimilation of our bodies to Christ's *body of glory*, that, as the apostle St John tells us', 'WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM, AND SHALL SEE HIM, AS HE IS.'

On the other hand, the bodies of the wicked, or unrighteous, are not to expect such a *transformation*; they are to be raised again indeed, but with all their fleshy tendencies and inclinations about them; and, for aught the scriptures say to the contrary, in the same *substance*, capable of touch, feeling, and resistance; and if so, it is not too much to believe, that they shall be sensible of, and affected by a *material fire*, as the scripture more than insinuates*, when thus describing their sentence, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire;' and the rich man in the parable† speaks of being 'tormented in this flame.' Certain it is, that they shall have no communication of the *δόξα*, the glory, the cherubic brightness, and so shall be separated from God, ordered to depart, not from the all-seeing eye of God, which will be
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* St John iii. 2.

† St Matth. xxv. 41.

‡ St Luke xvi. 24.

ever with them to punish them, *nor from the Almighty power of God, which will be ever in them to support them under their torments, but from JEHOVAH THE GLORY, בְּרִיחֵהוּ, which never after their condemnation shall be exhibited to them.*

Perhaps some of the arguments, as well as the expressions, which I have used, may be thought either uncertain or obscure; as indeed on such subjects, it is not easy, nay it is almost impossible; to find words in our language properly expressive of such mysterious ideas. All that I wish (as it is all at which I have aimed) is, that nothing that I have said may be found *contradictory* in itself, or 'contrary to sound doctrine,' that is, *to the doctrine of Holy Scriptures explained by themselves, and received in the church.* It will be a work of charity done me, to correct any point wherein I shall have erred; and, if the matter which I have collected, shall on perusal meet with the approbation of competent judges, men of candour and ability, I shall hope, that the little which I have brought forward, may be an introduction to further enlargements on such useful topics, especially at a time, when from certain appearances, it will be owned to be the duty of all christians to lay aside their persecutions against one another, and so unite against its common and combined enemies, the Jews, and infidels of modern times.

ΜΟΝΩ ΘΕΩ ΔΟΞΑ.

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THE Editor thinks it proper to observe, that, from some notes which were found among Mr Skinner's papers, it would appear that his manuscript on the SHECHINAH had been transmitted to a friend in London, who had shewn it to two very competent judges of its merit, accompanied with a request, that they would favour him with their remarks on it. One of these gentlemen, at that time but a 'young divine', was the afterwards highly distinguished Dr George Horne, Bishop of Norwich, and the other was the Rev. Benjamin Holloway, Rector of Middle Stoney, Oxfordshire,

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¹ In the year 1756, a pamphlet was published under the title of 'A Word to the Hutchinsonians, or Remarks on three extraordinary Sermons lately preached before the University of Oxford, by the Rev. Dr Patten, the Rev. Mr Wetherall, and the Rev. Mr Horne—By a Member of the University.' The design of this pamphlet was to censure, and to hold up to ridicule, the behaviour of these, and other Hutchinsonian divines, which, the writer says, 'had become matter of general complaint—the general complaint of men truly respectable as scholars and as christians.' After bitterly-inveighing against the discourses of Dr Patten and Mr Wetherall, (the latter of whom was afterwards for many years *Master of University College*, and *Dean of Hereford*), this angry critic falls foul of Mr Horne's sermon, and affects to point out the preacher to particular scorn, under the character of—'this young divine.' An able refutation of all this calumny was soon announced to the public, in a pamphlet entitled "An apology for certain Gentlemen in the University of Oxford, &c. by George Horne, Fellow of Magdalen College."—When the apologist came to take notice of the objection made to his *youth*, the only remark he offered, with his usual good humour, was, "that is a fault which will mend every day."

author of *Originals Physical and Theological*, &c. who transcribed Mr Horne's remarks on the same sheet with his own, calling them the ' Strictures of Mr ' Horne, a prime Hutchinsonian.' In reference to Mr Holloway's remarks, the following note was found subjoined to Mr Skinner's manuscript; ' A ' learned divine of the church of England has inti- ' mated his opinion as different from mine, respect- ' ing the Shechinah or glory being still in the ' church, under the symbols of bread and wine. ' This he seems to think is not the case, because ' the Shechinah implies a really outward and visible ' glory, to which, he says, *symbolic* and *invisible* is ' a contradiction. This in so far is very true; ' but what I advance is, that the eucharistic sym- ' bols of bread and wine stand to us instead of the ' Shechinah of the Jewish œconomy; and that, as ' by this Shechinah, (which was only a likeness or ' appearance, and no substantial exhibition), the ' redeeming person in Jehovah was present in the ' Jewish temple, so by the consecrated symbols in ' the eucharist he continues to be present in the ' christian church. The objections, therefore, which ' have been made to this part of my hypothesis, ' seem to have arisen from not taking my expres- ' sions in the same sense in which I wished them to ' be understood, and from distinguishing too nice- ' ly between *symbols*, *exhibitions*, and *representations*, ' all which I am inclined to view in the same light, ' as excitors to *faith*, in opposition to bodily organic ' *sight*; and I do still think, that all I have said ' is

‘ is so far from being repugnant to scripture, or
 ‘ from affording the least pretence for adopting the
 ‘ popish absurdity, that it erects a no less power-
 ‘ ful bulwark against Romish transubstantiation,
 ‘ on the one hand, than against Calvinistic memo-
 ‘ rialism on the other.’ Notwithstanding this small
 shade of difference in opinion, Mr Holloway con-
 cludes his strictures in these words, addressed to the
 friend who had put the manuscript into his hands :
 ‘ Thus I have given you the hints, which I had
 ‘ struck out in my kind of running short hand, and
 ‘ which I hope will be taken in good part, as on
 ‘ the whole I commend the work, and with the
 ‘ proper corrections, think it will be demonstrative
 ‘ of the author’s great parts, piety, and might in
 ‘ the scriptures, and will do good service to the
 ‘ church.’

Such commendation from Mr Holloway will have
 some weight with those, who look back with due ve-
 eneration to the character of the late honourable and
 learned *Duncan Forbes*, Lord President of the Court
 of Session, who, in a letter published as a preface
 to Mr Holloway’s *Originals*, among other testimo-
 nies of high approbation, gives the following :
 ‘ Though I cannot take upon me to pronounce,
 ‘ that Mr Holloway’s system will answer the ex-
 ‘ pectation he has conceived of it, yet I must con-
 ‘ fess, I wish he may meet with due encouragement
 ‘ to go on with his design, that the world may see,
 ‘ what industry and ingenuity, such as his seems to

be, guided and promoted by a zeal for truth and 'religion, may produce.' After mentioning some of the difficulties, which he knew Mr Holloway's system would have to encounter, particularly what would be found to arise from the vanity and the obstinacy of men, who have grown old in pursuing the hitherto beaten path, who have given up their understanding to the fanciful conceits of the Jewish Rabbins, and of several ingenious christians, who have even refined on the Jewish grammar, the learned President then adds: 'These gentlemen ' will be very unwilling to part with the learning ' they pride themselves in, and some part whereof ' I believe may be useful. And from them, I fear, he ' will meet with discouragement. But I should ' nevertheless hope, that the generality of the curious, who are not bigotted to any particular set ' of notions, will be glad to see how far Mr Holloway can carry his principles; which, if they ' are to be maintained, will open a new and very ' agreeable scene for meditation.'

AN
ESSAY
TOWARDS
A LITERAL, OR TRUE RADICAL EXPOSITION
OF THE
SONG OF SONGS,
WHICH IS
SOLOMON'S.

PROÆMIUM.

HÆC non ingrati tandem monumenta laboris
Exegi, studiis non aliena piis.
Mystica multa insunt, nova, forte nec obvia, quædam
Quæ tamen ex sacro fonte petita fluunt.
Nulla Ægyptiaci, quantumvis pulchra, tyranni
Filio divino carmine digna nitet :
Quem sponsæ CHRISTUS, quem CHRISTO spondet amorem
Sponsa suo, grande hoc ! casta Thalia canit.
Nil juvat hic Naso, nihil hic tua, Flacce, Camæna,
Nihil Sappho, aut Teii musa jocosa Senis,
Non quæ lascivos delectant mollia Persas,
Non quæ semiferus turgida cantat Arabs.
Nulla hic Eois morum de fontibus hausta
Ille lyræ sanctæ Dux imitanda trahit :
Queis caneret Solomon, ficti sine Apollinis arte,
Et verba et numeros, SPIRITUS ipse docet.
Hinc irrisores, vos hinc procul este profani,
Parcite cœlesti, spurca caterva, Lyræ !
Hic vestris nihil invenietis gustibus aptum,
Suave nihil vobis Cantica nostra sonant.

At bene si feci, tu, lector amice, faveto :
Sin male—tu veniam, lector amice, dato.

INTRODUCTION ;

ADDRESSED IN THE FORM OF

A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

SIR,

I HAVE read over the '*Song of Solomon paraphrased*;' which you were so good as to send me, and find myself unable to form any thing like a favourable opinion of it. Had the critical talents of the author been employed upon an Idyllium of Theocritus, or an Eclogue of Virgil, I should have readily fallen down the stream of applause, and been as forward as others to give him all the praise due to the neatness of his performance. But alas! a poem written in the age of Solomon, if this one be such a poem, is of a date by far too ancient to be explained or commented upon according to the

¹ Published at Edinburgh, without the author's name, in the year 1775, and dedicated to Dr Lowth, then Bishop of Oxford.

the novel customs of Pagan folly, or Talmudic apostacy. Yet is it now the prevailing fashion to call in the Talmud and Alcoran for the purpose of illustrating, and, as it were, giving sanction to, the writings of Moses and the prophets; and this being the plan on which our present author has conducted his work, I feel no hesitation in thus stating my sentiments to you, that I think his *ground-work* in general is wrong laid, and consequently all his additional aids and embellishments are of no use.

I know he has the current of commentators on his side, in supposing the occasion of this, even by their own confession, DIVINE Song, to have been the affair of king Solomon's marriage with Pharaoh's daughter. And from this common, but ill-founded hypothesis, come all the fancies and follies of laboured description, which we have seen produced upon this subject. For, to such as you and me, who view the Bible, through all its parts, in a just and proper light, it will appear not a little uncouth, to find a bridal-ballad, even from a royal pen, inserted into the body of that sacred code, as forming by its position some sort of connection between the law and the prophets, and there left to the mercy of either *spiritualizer* or *prophaner*. The author of this Song, if conversing now among us, may warrantably enough say to the most of modern expositors, in the words of an old and authentic writer, 'there is a great mystery here, but I speak

‘ speak concerning Christ and the church.’ And if, for form’s sake, we must fall in with the fashion, and allow a wife of the earthly Solomon to be the *typical* spouse, as the phrase is, of the Canticles, I cannot discover what title Pharaoh’s daughter has to that character. There is nothing in the scripture-history to countenance the supposition. Solomon’s making affinity with Pharaoh, and marrying his daughter, is spoken of in terms that may imply censure rather than approbation; and there are many other passages of holy writ that condemn any intercourse with Egypt; and represent the ‘ trusting in the shadow of Egypt,’ as tending only to ‘ confusion.’ It is not therefore very likely that one of such a hated nation, a daughter of that revolting interdicted race, would have been adorned by a sacred writer with such high encomiums, as the spouse in the poem is clothed with. Besides, we do not read of any children that Pharaoh’s daughter had to Solomon. And it does not look well that such a celebrated *type* of the church should appear childless, especially when we remember the description given with a like view, and in a song also of the same import—‘ Instead of ‘ thy fathers thou shalt have children.’ We are sure that Solomon’s son Rehoboam, through whom, foolish as he was, the promise of the *seed* was carried on, was not the son of this woman: And we read of one long before Solomon’s time, and who

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¹ Ephes. v. 32.² Psalm xlv. 16.

certainly was an eminent type, who by faith saw so much opposition betwixt Christ and Egypt, that for that reason 'he refused to be called the son of 'Pharaoh's daughter'.' Against Rehoboam's mother, indeed, the commentators of this stamp draw an objection from her being of Ammonitish birth; and this objection which, in support of their own argument, is thought of great weight, they found upon the prohibition against admitting an Ammonite or Moabite into the congregation of the Lord². But it should be remembered, that this prohibition excludes the Moabite as well as the Ammonite; and yet we find, not long after the date of it, a Moabitish woman brought into the sacred succession: From which it may be presumed, that *Naamah*, (the delightful one, as her name bears), the mother of Rehoboam, and consequently a progenitrix of the Messiah, should bid as fair, if such a female character must be had, for being the heroine of this Song, as Pharaoh's daughter, who, though from the history, it may be supposed she was Solomon's best beloved wife, (a circumstance thought to weigh greatly in her favour), yet was denied the honour of producing a successor to the throne, or an ancestor to the Messiah. What weak shadow of proof has been, or may be, drawn from some expressions in the song itself, as seeming to favour this darling hypothesis, I shall consider fully

¹ Heb. xi. 24, 25.

² Deut. xxiii. 3.

³ Ruth iv. 21. St Matth. i. 5.

fully when I come, in course, to the explication which I intend to offer of these passages; when I hope I shall be able to make it appear, that there is nothing in the genuine and radical signification of the words to countenance such a fancy.

Upon the whole, I have never yet seen what there is either without or within this Poem, that can be adduced either as extrinsic or intrinsic evidence of its application to, or connexion with, either Pharaoh's daughter, or any other real woman, or bride, or wife whatever, of the natural Solomon: And it is this strange dream, I do not know how or when begun, of its being, in its original structure, an *Epithalamium*, or marriage-song, to celebrate the amorous Solomon's love of, and espousals with, some beautiful favourite damsel, that has produced such torrents of ribaldry and burlesque on the subject, and made it impossible for divines and commentators, while under the restraint of this prejudice, to give a clear and justifiable account of this heavenly Song. What a pity it is, that such a valuable piece of poetic antiquity, which contains so many instructive sublimities, and has so long made a figure among the patterns of elegant composition, should be still shaded under such an useless and ugly veil as this fundamental mistake throws over it? For my own part, rather than be burdened with this dead weight, which I find no ground for, nor service from, I could dispense with the Poem out of the sacred code altogether, and would think

this a safer piece of freedom, if in such a case any freedom can be safe, than, after admitting it into the catalogue of inspired writings, to stain the confessedly divine lustre of it with such a material blemish, of confessedly human invention. All this, you will say, is but declamation: Be it so; at least it is on the safe side, and in so far plausible. And, pray what is there on the other side but declamation? The hypothesis is first laid; one expositor differing from, and contradicting the rest, in many other particulars, but all agreeing in this, and taking all possible methods, every thing indeed but argument and proof, to establish it. Solomon's character, it is true, in the latter part of his life, offers some handle for this hypothesis; and I cannot help suspecting, that this lascivious turn of the old monarch may have been the occasion, some time or other, of making one of his marriages the foundation and subject of the Song before us.

Indeed I have often almost pitied this ancient mirror of wisdom. Never, I dare say, has the world seen a more voluminous, and, if all be true that is said of him¹, a more instructive writer. Of all this vast treasure we have only three small pieces remaining, his *Proverbs*, *Preacher*, and *Song*. And what is the general reception they meet with? His *Proverbs* are put on a level with the moral sayings of Theophrastus; his *Preacher* is adduced to coun-

¹ 1 Kings iv. 30—34.

countenance atheism, and his *Song* wantonness. Then we lament that his other works are lost; his 'Universal Natural History, his three thousand 'Proverbs, and a thousand and five Songs;' tho, from the way in which we treat the part that is preserved, it may be guessed how we should have treated the part that is lost. Yet we must believe him to have been the wisest man upon earth, if we be really what we profess. And wherein does this superior wisdom appear? Not, I am sure, in any of his writings that are extant, as they are commonly interpreted, where, upon that footing, there is little but what a Seneca or Epictetus, as philosophers, an Anacreon or Theocritus as poets, might have said, as much to the purpose. Is it credible, at least to christians, who acknowledge a divine providence in the preservation of what we call the Scriptures, that of all the many works of a man who is particularly recorded for his wisdom, and to whom God himself says, 'I have given thee a 'wise and understanding heart, so that there was 'none like thee before thee, neither after thee 'shall any arise like unto thee', that providential care would have allowed the greatest part to perish, and only selected for preservation two or three short fragments, where, as many understand them, there seems to be little or nothing but what might have come from an almost ordinary human pen? In the case before us, of this only remaining Song,
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out of 'a thousand and five,' upon the present supposition of its being designed to solemnize a great king's marrying a beautiful woman, I again put the question, What is there in it that argues the so much extolled wisdom of the inspired Solomon? And I can refer it to any of the poets or admired composers of the present age, whether with the use of the same bold metaphors, as they are called, and making allowance for the difference of manners, they could not have warbled out as lofty strains upon such a splendid occasion. Could not a royal bard, a youthful Solomon, have thus described his early loves, and serenaded his blooming blushing bride in pompously pastoral lays, without the assistance of divine inspiration? And if inspiration had no hand in it, I still ask, what has it to do in the company of the real productions of that truly and only heavenly muse? There was no necessity for the writer of it, if he was under inspiration, to have any antecedent ideas of that sort, from which to draw his description; and, if he was not under inspiration, it is not worth the explaining or commenting upon. A bright imagination, indeed, may discover a vast many beauties in it, and be able to draw a number of striking allusions from it: and the same has been done with some of Ovid's Fables and Virgil's Eclogues. But the misfortune is, imagination is a dangerous thing, and, when allowed to wander without proper direction, may as readily debase as exalt its subject. The same stretch of fancy, that can spiritualize Ovid's Apollo

Apollo and Daphne, can turn to lasciviousness even the Song of Solomon; and where shall we find a check, if there be no inspiration in its composition?

Inspiration, at least our belief of inspiration, is the only thing that can fix our views to one point, by presenting to us one, and only one, leading idea through the whole. What this leading idea is, we are not to gather implicitly from the authority of former expositors, but to search for it diligently in the structure and expression of the piece itself. I am sensible what may be said against all this; and the only shelter, which I shall seek, is in the regard and reverence which we all profess for *inspiration*, and which consequently ought to be paid by such professors to it, in preference to all, even the most sublime of human compositions. It is in this view that I behold this admirable Song, as no way depending upon, or connected with, any carnal transaction of courtship or marriage, or the like, but as decyphering something grand, spiritual, and mysterious, in proper and expressive language, not by bold metaphors and eastern allusions, as the phrase runs, but in words of either emblematical meaning, or of significant and descriptive interpretation. This, I think, may be taken for granted, that inspiration, like what is said of Nature, ‘*nil agit frustra*,’ does nothing in vain, and never interferes but where there is necessity. And if this maxim be admitted as to the Song in question, we must

must renounce the old story of Solomon's marriage, either with Pharaoh's daughter, the most unlikely of all, or Naamah, the Ammonitess, or any thing of that kind, and seek for some other subject of such a nature as that Solomon could have known nothing of it, nor *sung* so copiously upon it, without the direction of that inspiration which we are willing to attribute to it. It has been long complained of, that people come to the scriptures with antecedent prejudices; and, instead of seeking knowledge from scripture, endeavour to accommodate, even to wrest scripture to their own preconceived opinions; and in no part of scripture is there more cause for this complaint than in the part before us. We have been long accustomed, in compliance with great authorities, to look upon it in the debasing light, which I am alluding to, and would wish removed. The plan complained of has, we see, produced nothing but uncertainty and confusion, and the wild absurd necessity of bringing in the ridiculous nonsense of either heathen ignorance or Mahometan perversion, to explain and account for the inspiration of the wise Solomon. And what has christianity gained by all this? The poem of itself very soon opens up to us the main design. We immediately discover two principal personages in it: the one in character of a *woman*, and with feminine appellations, all humility and dependence, desirous to please and afraid to offend, happy in her connexion, yet disclaiming all merit, taking nothing to herself, but attributing all to her beloved.

loved. The other, a *man*, a King, a great One, talking indeed in most affectionate strains of love, but still with an air of superior dignity ; inwardly conscious of, and outwardly expressing his own excellencies, his power, his glories, his condescension, and displaying, in every stage of his appearance, a port and grandeur not very usual, nor thought quite becoming in such cases. I need not stay to prove this : I have the concurrent acknowledgement of all commentators, and the sense of all readers, on my side. Now what is the meaning of all this ? Is this consistent with our present ideas of these matters, or indeed with what accounts we have of the manners of any polite age or nation whatever ? Is it likely, on the one hand, that a daughter of Pharaoh, the child of a mighty monarch, whose predecessors once had the Jewish people in bondage, and were still rivals to, and thought themselves at least equal with, the Jewish princes, would put on such an abject demeanour, and fall so low to a Jewish lover ? Or, on the other hand, that the well-bred Solomon, the *Augustus*, as he has been in compliment called, of these times, for the politeness, as well as splendour of his court, would assume, and that in the very prime of his love and gallantry, such an apparently ungenteel and discouraging mode of address ? Are any of the admired love-songs of antiquity, the *Idyllia* of Theocritus, the *Eclogues* of Virgil, or Ovid's ' *De Arte Amandi*,' of this form, or constructed upon this plan ? No, surely ; and if not, we have no need

of them, nor of any such like, to illustrate what we may think strange or difficult here.

The *Song of Songs* adopts no extraneous customs, follows no known pattern, talks in no random strain. It is upon a particular and extraordinary model, not even of Solomon's invention, but of heavenly original; it speaks the language not of foolish flattery, or servile courtship among mortal equals, but of becoming propriety between a superior and an inferior, between a king and a subject, between a God and a creature. No wonder that believers of all ages, (and none but believers have any title to meddle with it), have seen this peculiarity of style, and thence have been induced to believe it to be a 'description,' as the contents of our bibles call it, 'of the mutual love of 'Christ and his church.' To this idea, all the parts of it most harmoniously correspond; and by this they may all be explained. What necessity is there to force in any other? The friends of the scheme of Pharaoh's daughter must, and do acknowledge, that there are sundry expressions in the poem which cannot be easily adjusted to their favourite plan, and they would therefore, boldly enough one should think, be passing all such over as fiction or superfluous ornament. Why then should we be hampered with such a needless and troublesome plan any longer? Why not take this beautiful poem as it stands, without the burden of prior notions to darken it, or the labour of foreign assistance

tance to clear it up? No doubt there will be found some obscurities in it on a first reading; but it will bear a second: and, if that should not answer, let us, for decency's sake, at least pay Solomon the same regard that we do to a Pindar or a Sophocles. The productions of inspiration have this advantage, that they carry their own key along with them, and present a sure method of interpretation to every unprejudiced enquirer, that seeks no more than what they offer.

I foresee here what I shall meet with, and what a volley of ridicule I expose myself to, from the witty gentlemen with the plaything which they have drest up to themselves, on which to throw out their merriment, of the 'Self-interpreting Bible.' But raillery is not reasoning. And when there have been so many learned men, who have got a name by *under-rating* the Bible, let some pity at least be shewn to the few fools that venture upon the other extreme, and would go the length, if it were possible, of *over-rating* it. Give what we call the Bible justice, and I ask no more. Treat it only as we do other collections of ancient pieces, and the sneer against it, for it is but a sneer, will fall of course. It is certainly a collection from various pens indeed, but, which is its distinguishing excellency, all of the same AUTHOR. This particularity deserves consideration, as, though universally acknowledged, I fear it is not attended to, as it ought to be, by many who profess to believe that 'God

' is the author, and Solomon, and the other writers, ' only instruments.' . Now of this author's works we have a large, indeed a sufficient number, and of a long enough continuance, by which they may be tried one with another. And surely every author, such an author especially, must and will be found to be the best expositor of his own meaning : *Such an author*, I say, who we believe has pursued the same plan, and we see has always used the same language, through the long tract of more than a thousand years, from Moses to Malachi. In this view the Bible, I mean the Old Testament part of it, may justly be called a collection of the Hebrew classics, and under that character is fairly entitled to all the candour of criticism and mode of examination, usually applied in such cases. And the more so, when it is remembered, that it is the only specimen of the language extant ; and has been, either by the original construction of the language, or the peculiar superintendence of a divine care, or both, handed down through a repeated succession of more than twenty different writers, with so little variation, and still less of corruption, that the strictest scrutiny shall discover no material difference, as to facility of interpretation, between the phraseology of Moses, the first, and of Malachi, the last of them ; a privilege which no other collection in any of the most extolled languages can boast of, and which, therefore, even abstracting from the vast preference of subject, should

should recommend this one to our highest and most respectful attention.

To come to the point in hand, the writer of this SONG, who is still believed to have been no less a man than the renowned king Solomon, is one of these many instruments whom the divine Author of the Bible employed from time to time, to publish his precious treasure of useful and comfortable knowledge to the world. And he lived about the middle of that æra of illumination, between such of God's scribes as had gone before, and such as were to come after him, all under the impulse of the same DICTATOR, and by him directed to, and assisted in, the same uniformity of design. We take up this little piece of Solomon's; we read it over as well as we can; we admire the grand sublimity of its style, even under all the disparagement of translation: And I think the first question that our curiosity will start, is that of the *Æthiopian* nobleman on a like occasion—'Of whom speaketh the prophet this, of himself, or of some other man?' This stranger was in a fit situation for reading; he had no prejudices about Isaiah, no preconceived notions of the prophet's own personal state or condition of life: and his own good sense led him to see that the expressions, which had cast up to him, were such as could not in propriety belong to any mere man whatever. Let us apply this example,

example, and it is a providential one, to the case before us. In this song there are expressions, I might have said the whole of it is such, that do not suit either Solomon himself or any of his queens: How can we understand these things, 'εγω μη τις ὁδη-
' γωνη,' unless some one guide us? And who shall be this one? Nothing, we see, of the Ethiopian's former reading, and we may conclude a man of his character to have been a reader in his own way, could give him any satisfying insight into this affair. None of the oriental metaphors or manners, so mightily extolled now-a-days, were it seems of any service to him: the man wanted a guide, and he got one; and what was the method which this guide took? Indeed the only method that was proper on such a subject, and a method too that produced a happy effect—'He began at the same scripture, and preached unto him JESUS.' Here is our method proposed to us, a method warranted by authority, and recommended by its success. The two writers, both the Ethiopian's Isaiah, and our Solomon, give us descriptions above human level. Solomon speaks not of himself, any more than Isaiah did. And from Solomon here, we may do what Philip did from Isaiah, find out JESUS. But we confuse ourselves with a multiplicity of foreign reading, and wildly seek for assistance in our scripture enquiries, where there is little or no chance to find it. For what contemporary writers of that stamp were there in Solomon's age, to transmit to us the customs and phrases of these times? The
Hesiods

Hesiods and Homers, the Anacreons and Pindars, the Berosuses and Herodotuses, these great names of what is vaguely and unfairly called antiquity, were not so early up by many years. We are told indeed a great deal of the customs, and what not, of the Arabs, and Persians, and Mahometans, in times far posterior to Solomon's æra, as if these were the only illustration of what was standard speech or practice some eight or nine hundred years before. I do most readily acknowledge, that contemporary writers, especially such as are of the same nation, and speak the same language, and handle the same subject, are both useful and necessary for throwing light upon, and expounding one another: and this advantage we have, to a happy degree, in the sacred collection we are possessed of.

Of Solomon's own composition, we have, besides this Song, other two pieces much to the same purpose, though written in something of a different manner. Let these be applied to for elucidation where they can afford it, as we would apply to Virgil's Georgics or Æneid for elucidating one of his Eclogues, or to Horace's Satires or Epistles for the meaning of an Ode. And, if these shall not always answer, we have, what I may literally call contemporary, some compositions of his royal father David, whose language and ideas we may reasonably conclude his son and successor Solomon would readily adopt. Here, therefore, by the rules of even modern criticism, we have some kind of auxiliary

liary interpretation gained. But we have more than all this ; for, upon the footing of inspiration, and by the consequent concession of God's authorship, I can call Moses also a contemporary writer. And, when it is remembered how solemnly the Jewish people in general were charged to read and observe the law of Moses, and how careful the good men among them were always so to do, we may warrantably believe the wise Solomon would be no stranger either to Moses' doctrine or to his words, especially such words as were of importance to convey any mysterious or emblematical meaning. The same is to be said of all the writers that came after Solomon. They were all confined, by their employer, to the same matter, and taught to use much the same words. So that, upon the whole, we can be at no loss for proper assistance in searching and studying their several writings ; as it would be a singularly strange affair, if, in such a multitude of various pens, all conducted by the same unerring hand, and principally pointed to the same grand design, we should not meet with something in one, to clear up and remove any apparent difficulty in another. It is certain, our blessed Saviour, and his apostles after him, in all their argumentations, still looked back and referred to Moses and the prophets. And though it be lamented by some, and wondered at by many, that there are not more of their quotations and proofs, out of these writers, recorded, which it may be thought would have made every thing plain, and

silenced all controversy, we now see, and every humble christian will admire, the gracious intention of this procedure, both to prevent the inconvenient bulk of our revelation code, and to awaken our curiosity, if such matters deserve our curiosity, to the diligent observance of that general precept, 'Search the scriptures'. The *scriptures* recommended at this time, and by the author of this precept, were only that ancient collection I am speaking of, in which, we are undoubtedly sure, the poem under consideration always stood as a part, and consequently is entitled, along with the rest, to the *search*, the *investigation* here enjoined. The enjoiner makes no distinctive exception, and gives no preferable direction to one part of the received collection more than to another; as well knowing that they all pointed to the same view, and all uniformly concurred, according to their several modes, in the one gracious work of exhibiting to the studious *searchers* the consolatory prospect of 'eternal life, by their joint testifying of Jesus.' And, though we meet with no quotation formally adduced out of this mysterious part of what was included in the general injunction, yet from some of the other parts we have a sufficient number recorded, to be both a direction and a key to us. Our Saviour from his own mouth, and his apostles in their narrations, have applied to him many passages out of the Old Testament, which at first sight

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seemed to carry no such application, as every christian must have observed, and I hope observed it with delight. And, if one or two passages in a song or psalm, or prophecy, do once appear to belong, and in a peculiar manner to Him, there is neither difficulty nor impropriety in carrying the pleasing idea through the whole; as it will not be thought altogether decent, nor found very consistent, to be jumbling the transactions of this world and the mysteries of his love and wisdom together, in one continued thread of discourse. If after all there shall still remain in any or all of these sacred publications, and in this Song among the rest, any obscurity or unfathomable depth, about which, after all our attention and diligent examination, we cannot attain to full satisfaction, let us trust the discovery of such hidden beauties, as beauties we are sure they are; to that happy state, with the prospect of which the apostle thus comforted himself—‘ Now we see through a glass, ‘ darkly, but then face to face; now I know in ‘ part, but then shall I know, even as also I am ‘ known!’ Till which time, let us gratefully adore where we do know, and reverently admire where we do not.

And now with these assistances, and under these limitations, let me be permitted, in character of a humble *searcher*, and under the obligation of that comprehensive precept, to try
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what can be made in the way of interpretation, of this applauded POEM, which has so much employed the pens of critics and commentatators, both for and against it. I have already objected, and given my reasons for objecting, against the fancy of Pharaoh's daughter, or indeed of any temporal transaction whatever, being the original basis of such a lofty specimen of inspired poetry, which appears to me to discover sufficiently, in every part of it, what has been not only the primary, but even the sole intention of its great AUTHOR. And if it shall be judged any way censurable to begin with such an ill-looking piece of opposition to, and deviation from, so many 'learned' of former times, let the attempt, weak and inconsiderable as it may appear, pass for an experiment of what may be done *without* that old notion; now that so many repeated Essays have shewn how unlucky they are *with* it. I see the labour it has cost the abettors of the marriage plan, to reduce the Poem into something of methodical construction, and to branch it out into seven of what they call Eclogues, thereby to adjust it to the seven days of the marriage-feast, which, they tell us, the Jews in Barbary observe to this day: and, as they have nothing but conjectures on which to build this supposed partition, they might with equal propriety have made eight Eclogues out of it, in conformity to the common division of it into eight chapters.

On the very face of this Poem, it is visible that

it observes neither order nor method, is constructed on no pastoral model, and confined to no dramatic rules, but is wholly made up of *Rhapsodies*; or, if this once proper Greek word shall be now thought improper in sacred matters, of raptures, broken but descriptive exclamations or acclamations to and from the *two* speakers; and looks backward and forward, wildly, dare I say, and extatically, into the various states of connection between the great, the gracious hero, and his happy beloved. Upon this hypothesis, if it shall be called no more, which the writers I differ from allow to be a part, and I would fain take to be the whole, of its design, it may be possible to investigate its beautiful meaning, in most places, without much display of extraneous assistance, or forced artifice of fanciful arrangement. Its venerable language, for venerable it certainly is, whether we admit it to be the language of Paradise or not, has confessedly something so singular in its constitution, that the least acquaintance with it will soon find it to be the surest and safest explainer of itself. The calling in of what some term *sister* dialects, but which appear rather to be corrupted *descendants*, may tend to obscure, but can add nothing to the lustre of the old *mother*. From her own pure and unmixed fountains, flowing down to us through so many ages, I would wish to draw my explications; and shall be well enough pleased, when I find this or that translation going along, but no way disturbed when it is otherwise. I need
make

make no previous apology for such a freedom, as it is only claiming the liberty which so many before me have assumed ; and with this plea in my excuse, that it is more respectful to this inspired Poem to contemplate it in its own native and inherent excellencies, than to daub it over, however prettily, with fictitious colourings. Under what allusions, or boldness of metaphor, an eastern monarch might have regaled his favourite *Sultana*, is little or none of my concerns as a christian. As a critic, or pretender to that high title, I might applaud or censure, extol beauties, or point out blemishes by way of amusement ; and, whether just or not, it would be of little consequence. But in what strains, or in what terms of description, the Spirit of God would direct the wise Solomon, or any other of his chosen scribes, to express any degree of intercourse and communication between Christ and the church, is an affair of a more solemn nature, and challenges all the seriousness of attention, which the soul that thinks itself interested in such a description can bestow upon it. In this predicament I place myself ; and am happy to find in the midst of the ‘ living oracles’ a poetic composition of a peculiar style, which, from its construction, seems to contain some hidden mysteries ; and, from its situation, leads me to receive it as analogous to its sacred companions of the same character : under which analogy, I would wish, in all humility and dependance upon proper help, to search and examine it by itself, detached from all useless and unnecessary

cessary mixtures ; and shall now lay before you the result of my endeavours, to be entertained by you with the regard which the importance of the subject deserves, whatever opinion you shall see cause to form of my particular manner of handling it.

AN

AN
ESSAY
 TOWARDS
A LITERAL, OR TRUE RADICAL EXPOSITION
 OF THE
SONG OF SONGS,
 WHICH IS
SOLOMON'S.

CHAP. I.—VER. 1.

THIS very title, as we call it, which has always stood at the head of the Song, demands our notice. The Song of Songs, שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים, Heb. The Singer of Singers, which is Solomon's, אֲשֶׁר לְשִׁלֹּמֹה, literally, as in the Septuagint, ὁ ἐστὶ τῷ Σαλωμων, which is for Solomon. We have this inscription at the head of two of the Psalms, the 72d and the 127th. The 72d has simply לְשִׁלֹּמֹה, εἰς Σαλωμων say the LXX. ipsi Selomah, says Arius Montanus, and our Bible has it, a psalm 'for Solomon.' The marginal note indeed

indeed has it *of*: But that it was not of Solomon's composing, is plain from the conclusion, 'The prayers of David,' &c. The 127th is thus entitled, A Psalm of degrees *for* (marg. *of*) Solomon; LXX. Σαλωμωντ in the genitive, *of* Solomon; which difference in the translations of the *Seventy*, may indicate that these translators thought that this song and the 72d psalm had the same view, and tended to the same object. Now, it is plain that the psalm will not apply throughout to the earthly Solomon; and why should the song which has the same address be forced into such an application? If I should lay hold of its inscription as parallel to the 72d psalm, to suppose Solomon himself *not* to be the writer of this Song, or, to go farther, that David had written it, I should have something, as the reader will see, like warrant for it; and could thereby cut down the marriage-story, which has been taken up with not near so much reason. But my plan does not depend on such uncertainties; for, whoever was the writer, it was designed for שלמה Solomon, such a Solomon as all the parts of it could quadrate with. The word is formed from שלם Shalm, PEACE, and with the addition of the possessive affix ה, *her* peace. We render it commonly *peaceable*, which is too low and confined an idea, and does not take in the whole extent of the name — 'His name shall be *Shalmah*, for I will give *peace* to Israel in his days'. This describes both
him

him who has it, and for whom he holds it. Accordingly the real Solomon, the **שֵׁן שָׁלֹמֹה**, The Prince of Peace¹, claims this appellation to himself, in that gracious promise, 'Peace I leave with you, my peace,' **εἰρήνην τὴν ἐμὴν**, (the peace which is mine), 'I give unto you²;' and in the fulfilment of that promise, on his first appearance to his people after his resurrection, he said, 'Peace be unto you³.' In concert with which, we find an apostle directing the application of this title, and teaching the church to whom to give it—'He is our peace⁴,' as it were **שָׁלְמָנוּ** *Shalmanu, our Solomon*. So says the song here, a song of (*Singers*) the church to *Him* who is 'her peace.' *Let him kiss me, &c.* This makes a connexion, and points out the *Him*. It is observable, that our English translators, contrary to their practice in the titles of the psalms, make this the first verse, and so not the title, but beginning of the piece. This accounts for, and removes the seeming abruptness, with which we are told this poem, in conformity with the eastern poetry, begins; and puts a description into the church's mouth of the intention of her address, in what follows.

VER. 2.—*Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth:
For thy love is better than wine.*

We have seen who this *He* is, and we can be
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¹ Isaiah ix. 6.

² St John xiv. 27.

³ St John xx. 19.

⁴ Ephes. ii. 14.

at no loss what is to be understood by this fervent and familiar wish. Kissing among the ancients was always a solemn action, and betokened respect, reconciliation, or peace, to such a degree, that when Judas kissed his Master, by way of sign to the band, who were come to apprehend him, our Jesus, our 'greater than Solomon,' condemned the unnatural prostitution of such a sign to so contrary a purpose, with that pertinent, but severe reproof, 'Judas, betrayest thou the Son of 'Man with a kiss'?' The practice of the early christian church may be considered as no bad comment; and what if I should suppose it to have been founded upon this introductory address before us? The scriptures not only speak of, but even recommend *kissing*, among the faithful: 'Salute ye 'one another with an holy kiss'. This had been an old adjunct, in what we call *salutation*; and generally followed the kindly question, 'Is all 'well?' which is always expressed by the word *שלום*, *peace*, 'Is there peace?' From which perhaps comes the Latin, '*salus*,' health, and its derivative verb, '*saluto*,' to wish, enquire about health, to salute; and the kiss on such occasions is, in polite language, called a *salute*. This old custom St Paul wished to have kept up among christians; and accordingly we find, in the histories of these primitive times, the practice observed even in their sacred

¹ St Luke xxii. 48.

² 1 Cor. xvi. 20. 2 Cor. xiii. 12. 1 Thess. v. 26.

sacred assemblies. Many of the old liturgies have rubrics to this purpose, directing, that after, in the entry of the service, the *Sacerdos*, the Bishop or priest had given the 'Peace be with you,' to the people, he should immediately say, 'Let us salute one another with a holy kiss:' And then the clergy kissed (saluted) the Bishop, the men the men, and the women the women, who had separate stations, and were not promiscuously intermingled, in the religious oratories of those days. Is there not an analogy here between this earthly observance of the ancient form enjoined by St Paul, especially from the kiss (*φιλημα* in Greek, 'expression of friendship') following the 'Peace be with you,' and the order of the language in the exordium of our song—a song to the *peace-giving* One.—'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.' But why this addition, 'the kisses of his mouth?' We shall be told, that this is a redundancy, and that the Hebrew idiom delights in such. But it may have a deeper meaning. 'Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord'—'Out of his mouth knowledge and understanding'; and many such like, may explain this, and discover the allusion. 'The law of thy mouth, the judgement of thy mouth,' &c. is current style with these old poets; and, I think, is designed to specify what we call *revelation*, the immediate operation of the mouth of Jehovah. God spake to Adam, to Noah, to Abraham, to Mo-

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ses,

² Deut. viii. 7.

² Prov. ii. 6.

ses, &c. in distinction from what weak, if any, discoveries might have been made of the divine laws and judgements, by what is now-a-days so much magnified and trusted to, under the specious appellation of 'the light of nature.' The 'mouth of 'the Lord' was the great, the only oracle with these *true sages* of antiquity; and every disobedience to, or deviation from it, was held in deep abhorrence by them. A due attention to this appearance of redundancy will account for that seeming severity in the case of the prophet¹, and the capital fault for which he suffered was, as the deceiving prophet tells him², 'because he had disobeyed (rebelled against, Heb.) the mouth of the Lord.' The history is worthy of our notice, and will add weight to my present observation. Not only so, but even in these phrases where this redundant style is applied by the sacred writers to themselves, we shall find a peculiar propriety and force, more than figure and ornament. 'I will cry unto God with 'my voice³;' 'I spake with my tongue, Lord, let 'me know my end⁴.' What should he cry with but his voice, will the philologist ask, or speak with but his tongue? True, but the christian knows that he can cry to God without a voice, and speak to Jehovah without a tongue. The heart is a proper conveyer to that quarter, though insufficient in human correspondence; and the warmth of the

¹ Recorded 1 Kings, ch. xiii.

² 1 Kings xiii. 21.

³ Ps. lxxvii. 1.

⁴ Ps. xxxix. 4, 5, &c.

the heart thus manifests itself in these not superfluous, but beautiful marks of external devotion; which, instead of being slighted, as no better than 'ornamental redundancies,' are to be revered by us, as emphatic essentials, not peculiar to the language, but to the subject; and as descriptive recommendations of the necessity of *oral* as well as *mental* prayer. On the whole, as 'kissing' is what may be called a mutual act, and leaves an impression, so is it in the spiritual intendment. The kisses of our Solomon's mouth, when asked with fervour, and received with faith, will have their effect, and will exemplify that ardent wish of another heavenly bard, which our church has adopted in her introduction to our daily public prayers: 'O Lord, open 'thou (kiss thou) our lips, and our mouth shall shew 'forth: thy praise.'" The rapturous strain of our song here, at the very entrance of it, seems to indicate this praising effect, 'Let him kiss me with the 'kisses of his mouth; for thy love is better than wine.' I shall have occasion in course to take notice of this introductory expression of praise: what I would observe at present, is the apostrophe here, or change of person, which, as it stands, needs no sanction of foreign example to adjust it to the laws of poetry. The speaker here well knew, that the PERSON she addressed was never out of hearing, so might be mentioned either way, as the devotion of her heart led her. This is the method of religious intercourse, when

when it comes from the heart, as every one who has made use of it knows. It is visible that the WOMAN, the *church*, through the whole of this song, speaks in this rapturous manner, by starts as it were, sometimes *of*, sometimes *to*, her beloved, without the studied elegance of connexion, but just as her feelings for the time directed her, in apostrophies and epiphonemas, with what commentators on the old plan call ‘that digressive unconnected wildness of transition, which all pastoral poetry ‘delights in,’ and which I would call ‘the ejaculatory effusions of an overflowing and experimental devotion.’ Whereas the MAN, the hero, the king, shews himself in an uniform and regular manner, with the style of personal and pointed address, affectionate indeed, but grand and majestic, and rather in character of a *master*, than *of a lover*. I make this remark once for all, as I think it both undeniable and useful. And the natural inferences from it, in confirmation of my plan, however singular, and unprecedented, will appear as we go along.

VER. 3.—*Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth; therefore do the virgins love thee.*

Thy ointments שֶׁמֶן *shamnicha*; the word signifies oil, which, from its healing quality, has been so much used in sacred rites among believers by institution, among apostates by perversion. The
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Levitical economy, as we call it, is full and precise about oil, and the inspired songs of the faithful lay stress upon it, not as a circumstantial embellishment, but as a necessary fundamental. ‘Thy oils,’ particularly, characteristically, and primarily *Thine*. ‘Thou fattenest my head with oil’¹. It is the shepherd Jehovah who does this, ‘with the oil of gladness’². And, as it were in parallel to our song, ‘Now will I sing to my beloved a song of my beloved, touching his vineyard’³. My beloved hath a ‘vineyard on the horn of the son of oil.’ We read it, ‘in a very fruitful hill,’ which is no translation, and a wretchedly bad paraphrase, notwithstanding of the great names who have adopted it. The oil, the product of the olive tree, has long stood in some connexion with God; so says Jotham’s fable, the oldest by far of the kind—‘by me they honour God and man’⁴. And it is worthy of notice, that this connexion is only applied to the olive and the vine. So oil and wine are the two healing ingredients, which *the good Samaritan*, the type of the true physician, poured into the dying man’s wounds⁵. Many such passages occur in holy writ to explain the church’s declaration here, and to lift our conceptions above the unmeaning wanderings of either heathen ignorance, or modern learning. ‘Thy name is (*as not in the Heb.*) oil poured (or

¹ Ps. xxiii. 5.² Ps. xlv. 8.³ Isaiah vi. 1.⁴ Judges ix. 9.⁵ St Luke x. 24.

(or actively ‘pouring’) forth.’ There is something curious here for christians to take hold of. ‘Thy name:’ the church speaks to *Christ the Messiah*. Both these names, the first Greek, the other Hebrew, come from verbs that express the action of anointing, so signify the anointed one, and discover to us christians, who take our title from this *ointment-name*, a beautiful turn in this part of the verse, which ought not to be disguised or kept out of sight. There is an expression similar to this, in another composition of this royal poet—‘A good name is better than precious ointment’.¹ So we read it, but literally, the ‘name is good from, because of, good oil;’ the same epithet that is used in the song, ‘thy good ointments.’ We have this speciality pointed out, where unity is said to be like ‘precious ointment’, good oil on the head.’ And what the value of it was, we may learn from Isaiah², when classing the ‘precious ointment,’ the good oil, among the curiosities which Hezekiah was reprov’d for exposing to heathen eyes. From all which put together, we shall be directed to the meaning of the NAME so emblematically magnified to us, and pointed out as the reason of the exclamation that follows, ‘Therefore do the virgins love thee.’ Who are these virgins? The pastoral fiction, so much laid hold of, will tell us, they are the bride’s companions and attendants; but with

¹ Eccles. vii. 1.² Ps. cxxxiii. 2.³ Isaiah xxxix. 2.

with how much propriety or delicacy is the question ; though attempts have been made to found this allotment on the parabolical allusion in St. Matth. xxv. 1. without remembering that, of the virgins introduced there, the one half were foolish, and were *shut out*. This spoils the whole of the application, and requires the aid of some other allusion. For whatever fancies the pastoral idea may allow, or even oblige us to hunt after, yet, if in what commentators call the *mystical*, and I insist on being the *only* sense, the woman here be the church, and if the church be *catholic*, it still remains to be asked, Who her attendant ministring virgins are? Let us, for trial's sake, turn to St Paul, through the whole of his first chapter to the Hebrews, and he will lead us to the idea of angels: 'The angels,' he says¹, 'are ministring spirits to 'the heirs of salvation.' Of these beings who, like the virgins here, are not of the church, some have not kept their first, their virgin state, but are foolish, have lost their communicated oil, and are shut out into darkness². Others continue wise, keep this oil in their lamps, love and worship their *Αρχη*³, attend upon, minister to the church, gather the elect from the four winds⁴, &c. These are virgins, they love the bridegroom for his oil, for his NAME, which, because of the *hereditary* oil in it, they know to be

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¹ Heb. i. 14.² St Jude 6.³ Heb. i. 6.⁴ St Matth. xxiv. 31.

‘more excellent than theirs,’ with their derived oil ‘—’ Therefore do the virgins love thee.’

VER. 4.—*Draw me, we will run after thee : the King hath brought me into his chambers ; we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine ; the upright love thee.*

The pastoral conceit makes strange work of this verse, by dividing it between the bride and her virgins, and putting the ‘we’ of it into their mouths as a compliment to her, for her many virtues, &c. However pretty this may appear in the common style of our poetry, I am afraid, in a spiritual view, there is harm in it ; and cannot help suspecting something, in such a turn, too much like the voice of the serpent. The expressions are too strong to be spoken of the church. From the church to her beloved, they are just, they are in character, they are spiritual. And, though the person changes from singular to plural, ‘draw me,’ ‘brought me,’ ‘we will run,’ ‘we will be glad,’ this we know is not unusual either in sacred or prophane song. The church often uses this manner, and I have accounted for it already. There is nothing here but what comes properly from the church, and from her *only* ; the singular ‘me’ expressing her collectively in a society ; the plural ‘we’ expressing her diffusively in the individuals of which she is composed. In this light all is plain and easy ;
and

¹ Heb. i. 4.

and instead of the dark, obscure style, as we call it, of the Old Testament, runs in the clear perspicuous vein of New Testament explication. ‘*Draw* me, we will run after thee.’ ‘No man cometh unto me, except the Father, which hath sent me, *draw* him.’ And more pointedly—‘And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will *draw* all men unto me.’ No ‘running,’ but by virtue of this antecedent ‘*drawing*.’ This is the constant lesson of scripture either expressed or understood, always intended by the prophets, and attended to by the faithful; so says the psalmist, in that noble hymn of devout joy, the 73d psalm, where our Bible translation has, I humbly think, put a different meaning on the psalmist’s words in the last verse, which we read, ‘it is good for me to draw near unto God;’ and the Prayer Book, more paraphrastically, but to the same sense, ‘to hold me fast by God. The words are קרבת אלילים לי טוב, literally, ‘*appropinquo Dei mihi bona*,’ as in Arius Montanus; or, more precisely, ‘*appropinquare Deum ad me bonum*—the drawing near of God to me is good;’ more consonant to the general voice of scripture, and in exact conformity to the church’s voice before us, which our portion of her has adopted in that most excellent collect, ‘Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings,’ &c.

The King has brought me into his chambers.—This deserves particular consideration; hitherto it might

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have

¹ St John vi. 24.

² St John xii. 32.

have been thought that the WOMAN had begun the intercourse, contrary to what I have been just now observing. But this acknowledgement removes that difficulty, and teaches us, that she can have no connexion with him, nor title in him, till she be entered into his house, and thereby become truly his church. And this, not by any forcible intrusion, or fond presumption on her part, but solely thro' the gracious act of his kingly power, giving her possession of his palace, and investing her with a right to all the various apartments and chambers of it. What this refers to, and is descriptive of, will readily appear to every christian who knows the privileges of that character, and reverences the instituted means of his being blest with them. It is upon 'brought by the king into his chambers,' that the thus constituted church can say with confidence, 'we will be glad and rejoice in thee.' Such a solemn phrase is this, and so frequently by all the Bible poets directed, as it were peculiarly, to the highest of all objects, that it is to be wondered how any christian expositor could allow himself to debase it by an inferior accommodation, or could have supposed, that an inspired writer would have had such unworthy accommodation in his eye.

We will remember thy love more than wine.—זכורנו
 זכורנו. The verb *zacar*, to remember, and in the hiphil form, as here, to be remembered, to commemorate, to celebrate by remembrance, is, in the Old Testament, applied to sacred institutions. *Zacrun* is

is a *memorial*. The Seventy render it sometimes by *μνημόσυνη*, sometimes by *ἀναμνησις*, and our Saviour, the *Solomon* here, has used it on a most sacred and love-displaying occasion; *Εἰς τὴν ἔμην ἀναμνησιν*, say his historians; ‘In meam commemorationem,’ Arius Montanus, in *remembrance* of me; which is rather diminutive, and diminutively understood, properly and more expressively of the design—‘To be my memorial.’ ‘We will commemorate thy love.’ דָּדִיִּךָ *dadicha*, plural, ‘thy loves.’ Christ’s love is manifold in himself, both as living and dying love; manifold in its operations to his church, forgiving, sanctifying, glorifying love, divine love in action, human love in suffering; so may very justly be called ‘Loves.’ ‘More than wine.’ So we read כֵּיִן, Heb. a *vino*, *from* wine. I know the preposition ב, which radically signifies *from*, is commonly the note of what grammarians call the ‘comparative degree’ in Hebrew, and is in Greek rendered by *ὑπερ*, *super*, *supra*, *above*; and our translation always follows this as a rule. But that it should be always so, does not appear. The context may sometimes indeed lead to it; but when the context does not absolutely require it, there can be no necessity for adhering strictly to it; especially in such a case as here before us, where the comparative meaning is not so very intelligible, and where we have such a clear key of interpretation otherwise. It is certainly no great stretch, a christian may think, when we meet with ‘commemorating’ and ‘wine together in the same sentence,

tence, to bring in the eucharistic institution, and thus read this refreshing text, 'We will commemorate,' celebrate thy love, thy manifold love, *unig anov*, super vinum, over wine; which will also serve to illustrate the parallel exclamation in the end of the second verse. We have a promise to this effect, and with something of an eucharistic aspect—
 'They that dwell under his shadow shall return,
 'they shall revive as the corn (relative to the
 'bread), and blossom as the *vine*; his (scent, we
 'read it, *zachrie*, literally as on the margin) *memo-*
 '*rial*, as the *wine* of Lebanon'. A due attention to this prophetic promise, along with many more such passages, would help to take off the ridicule, to which our careless translation has exposed an apophthegm of our royal preacher's*, which we read, 'A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry, but money answereth all things;' but literally in the author's words, 'making *bread* for a
 'rejoicing, and *wine* that delighteth the living ones,
 'and the desirable one will answer for the all'.
 Be in this what may, if the sense I have given of the text in the song will stand good, (and none should attempt to overthrow it, without assigning their reasons for so doing), then we see the happy consequences of 'being brought into the king's chambers,' and in how beautiful an order, notwithstanding the seemingly unconnected, but really
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* Hosea xiv. 7.

* Eccles. x. 19.

3 See Psalm lxxxiv. 2.

ly apposite change of number, the progress of the church to the several stages of felicity is in this verse carried on.

VER. 5.—*I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.*

‘Lest I should be exalted above measure thro’ the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh,’ said once an apostle, after the rapturous entertainment he had been blessed with. Such a lesson is the church taught here, by this mixt description put into her mouth, of ‘being black like the tents of Kedar, but comely like the curtains of Solomon.’ *Black*, we read it, which is too strong, and gives a disagreeable idea. שחורה *shekurah*, is nigricans, fusca, grey, darkish, &c. The idea is taken from the *morning*, which שחר *shahar*, signifies, and under which she is spoken of in ch. vi. 10. as fair and clear. ‘Who is she that looketh forth as *shahar*,’ ὡς ἡ ἄρουρα Lat. * the morning, fair as the moon, clear ‘as the sun,’ &c. beginning with greyness, but advancing into brightness, as our rural observation says, ‘the morning grey makes a fair day.’ The proper word for real *black*, is the other word here, קדר *kedar*, blackness of darkness, &c. Her situation, she says, among these tents, (See the lamentation, psalm

psalm cxx. 5. 'Woe is me, that I—dwell among 'the tents of Kedar'), which was her morning, early, infant state, had obscured her, and tinged her with a darkish unseemly colour; but such as, like the greyiness of the morning, might be removed and changed into *comeliness*; which we know, *kedar*, absolute blackness, cannot; real black being the only colour in nature that will not take on another dye. This is a humbling confession to one that was rejoicing in the king's chambers; but as all such, when sincere, are sweetened with the joyful remembrance of an agreeable change, like the encouraging voice to the apostle under his humiliating stroke, above referred to', 'My grace 'is sufficient for thee,' &c. So here, says the church, 'I am comely like the curtains of Solomon;' comely, desirable, not from any native beauty, or inherent perfections, but נֶאֱדָר (the passive form of אָדָר, *auah*), made so adorned, beautified, &c. 'like the curtains of Solomon.' * 'Who 'coverest with light as a garment, שְׁלֵמָה, (the very 'letters of Solomon's name,) and spreadest out the 'heavens like a curtain, יִרְעָה. The descriptive words are the same in both places; and if there be a resemblance, as the psalmist says, between *light* and what the Canticles call *Solomon*, which might be exemplified in sundry particulars, and between the heavens and curtains, which admits of no difficulty, may not this poetical text of the
psalm

* 2 Cor. xii. 9.

* Ps. civ. 2.

psalm be some kind of illustration of what the church means here by this diversified acknowledgment, that though, in her natural original state, she was infected with something of the black tinge of the *kedar* tents, yet when her Solomon had diffused his light about her from his heavenly curtains¹, then she became comely, pleasant, beautiful; and could look back to her former condition with even some degree of joy, in the language of the apostle, which every one of her pious members may adopt, ‘Most gladly therefore will I glory in ‘mine infirmities, that the power of Christ, the ‘light of Solomon, may rest, ἐπισκηνώσεται, dwell, tabernacle, upon me.’ The idea, which this gives, might be enlarged upon. But my design is only to point it out from the words, and refer the improvement to my readers. It will fall in here to be asked, who are those ‘daughters of Jerusalem,’ now for the first time before us? This is a frequent appellation in the prophetic language of scripture, and it needs no proof that the church is in that typical style understood by Jerusalem. We know, too, how many promises there are of bringing in Strangers, Aliens, Gentiles, into what Jerusalem signifies. These additional, converts, or dependants, are, in Hebrew phrase, called *daughters*. So it is in the historical chorography of the country, in the books of Joshua, Chronicles, &c. where, for what

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we

¹ See it literally fulfilled to the old church—Exod. xiv. 20. Psalm lxxviii. 14. &c.

we read such and such a place with her *towns*, the Hebrew is, with her *daughters*. And the prophet Ezekiel, in his emblematical reproof of the then church¹, uses the same language; and our translation has retained the original word, 'Samaria and her daughters, Sodom and her daughters,' &c. What the propriety or extent of such a connection may be, we can be at no loss to understand, when we are told by an authentic enough commentator, of a Jerusalem which is 'the mother of us all².' There needs little more to be said upon this; only to infer, that if the mother, as here, confesses her natural deformity, and acknowledges her Restorer, what have the daughters to boast of? Does not Ezekiel's cutting proverb apply here, 'As is the mother, so is the daughter³?' And let every individual make the application.

VER. 6.—*Look not on me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me; my mother's children were angry with me. They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept.*

The former degrading strain is here kept up, and more circumstantiated; but to whom addressed may be a question. 'Look not on me.'—The English makes no distinction; the Greek and Latin have

¹ Ezek. xvi.

² Gal. iv. 26.

³ Ezek. xvi. 44.

have the verb plural, 'look not *ye* on me,' as if to the daughters. The Hebrew seems singular, 'look not *thou* upon me,' as if to the king. Either sense has its lesson; of useful instruction, if plural; of deep humility, if singular; and I need not seek to decide. 'The sun hath looked upon me.' This is but the third place where the verb ~~נ~~ *saza*-*pha* is to be met with; the other two are Job xx. 9. and xxviii. 7. where the addition of 'the eye' has led translators to render it 'look or see;' though, by the application here, in something of a noxious sense, as even in spirituals it is acknowledged may sometimes be the case. The same sun, which in the natural world warms and vivifies, may likewise scorch and burn up. So in things spiritual, unless the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings, his looks of heat may bring on obdurations, swellings of pride, discolourings of hypocrisy, &c. Even the grace of God may be turned into lasciviousness; therefore, 'let him, who thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.'—'My mother's children were angry with me.' Who are they? Perhaps referring to the Egyptian bondage, when the church was oppressed by a nation, who, though then apostates, were once sons of the covenant, when in the loins of their forefather Ham^a; or farther back, and more extensively, to the general state of mankind under the dominion of Satan and his rebellious crew, who were once

^a Gen. ix. 9.

בני אלהים Sons of God, and so might be spoken of as relations. Her misery, the misery indeed of every one of us in such a state, is fully and elegantly held forth to us by their being 'angry with us' (hot upon us, Heb. alluding to the sun's 'looking' before) by our 'keeping their vineyards,' toiling and drudging in their shameful, fruitless, cursed service*, to the neglect of our own vineyard, our own work, the great, the only work of our *salvation*: Or, if this shall appear too forced, there is a more pointed and particular interpretation that the words will bear, and which, for my own part, I think more consonant to them—'They made me 'the keeper of the vineyards,' &c. The Greek, Latin, and English translations, read the Hebrew verb as plural; but ~~היו~~ is singular, posuit me, he placed, appointed me. He who had right or authority to order and dispose of the vineyards: Or impersonally, without any determined nominative, 'I was appointed;' like what we read in St Luke xii. 20. 'thy soul shall be required of thee;' literally, as on the margin, 'they require.' This will apply particularly to the Jewish church, which was entrusted with the keeping of the oracles of God*, 'the lively oracles', 'the adoption and the law, 'and the glory, and the testaments, and the worship, and the promises*.' Against this appointed keeper, her mother's children, while strangers from her

* Rom. vi. 21.

* Rom. iii. 2.

3 Acts vii. 38.

4 Rom. ix. 4.

her commonwealth, were angry, &c. as she herself pathetically complains on many occasions — ‘ Many
 ‘ a time have they afflicted me from my youth up,
 ‘ may Israel now say’. To this high trust, and charge of the vineyards, she was not always faithful ; her own vineyard she neglected, lost sight of, and departed from the true intent of the great favours conferred upon her, as her chief Appointer so frequently and fervently expostulates with her. Yet she remained still his chosen, his favourite, his fair one, entitled to his care and protection, as St Paul argues in his epistle to the Romans, and as Ezekiel had been taught, under her disgrace, to promise to her, in language analogous to, and explanatory of, the whole strain of our song — ‘ I will
 ‘ remember my covenant with thee, (my *berith*, or
 ‘ scheme of purification) in the days of thy youth,
 ‘ and I will establish unto thee an everlasting *berith* :
 ‘ and thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed,
 ‘ when thou shalt receive thy sisters, and I will
 ‘ give them unto thee for *daughters* ¹, but not by
 ‘ thy *berith* ⁴. And I will establish my *berith* with
 ‘ thee, and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah ;
 ‘ that thou mayest remember when I am pacified
 ‘ towards thee, saith Adoni Jehovah.’ May not what is here said in the song, compared with this parallel passage from the prophet, belong to the present keeper of the vineyards, the successor of
 that

¹ Ps. cxxix. throughout.

² Ezek. xvi. 60—63.

³ Cant. viii. 8.

⁴ Heb. viii. 9.

that once appointed one, the christian church, both collectively and diffusively, in all stations, public and private, particular and general. Let all concerned examine and improve.

VER. 7.—*Tell me, O thou, whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon : for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions ?*

This is the first direct address to her beloved, and it can be to none other. ‘Thou whom my ‘soul loveth’ explains itself;’ and I shall have occasion to take notice of it afterwards. ‘Where ‘thou feedest.’ This is likewise the first time we meet with this phrase; and from the current use of it after this, through the song, people have taken it into their heads to call the song, by way of compliment indeed, a *Pastoral*. But the first title we see given to the hero of the poem is *King*¹. Why then confine our ideas to shepherdising? I shall be told, I know, that we have many examples in both sacred and profane writers, of the united character of king and shepherd: how true this is in fact might be contended. I think we have little, if any, profane history before Abraham; and of him we read², that he was rich in sheep and oxen: yet we do not find that he fed them himself. For we are told that he and Lot had herdsmen, רועים *pastors*,
shep-

¹ Ver. 4.

² Gen. xii. 16.

*shepherds*¹. So had Isaac²: Yea, we meet with a very ancient nation, and whose kings made a figure in both sacred and profane history, to whom the character of shepherd was an abomination³. And therefore I call upon these rash assertors to produce particular instances, where kings in person fed their own flocks; or where a poem in praise of a king was ever called a pastoral. Homer indeed calls his Agamemnon, ποιμένα λαών, shepherd of the people. Do we, on that account, call the *Iliad* a Pastoral? The case is the same here; the first public appearance of the female character is her 'being brought into the *king's* chambers:' And through the whole, her beloved is as much spoken of in the character of king, as of a shepherd. Am I then denying, some will say, the united character of king and shepherd in the person of Christ? God forbid: I glory in the union, and would have it still remembered; which the pastoral fancy I think does not. The scripture, I know, describes him as a shepherd; what is the use of a Homer or a Virgil to justify the description? Yea, it would seem from scripture, that the united character of king and shepherd was peculiar to *Christ*; and he himself appears to lay stress upon this, in St John x. 4—16. Let a parallel instance be produced from other kings. A vague way of affirming will not serve. It is not even so

satis-

¹ Gen. xiii. 7.² Gen. vi. 20.³ Gen. xlv. 34.

satisfying as the common, but lame method of accounting for Melchisedec's being both king and priest, from the testimony of Virgil, near two thousand years after, with his, so much quoted, one instance of 'Rex Anius, rex idem hominum Phœbi-
'que sacerdos—Anius, king of men, and priest of
'Phœbus.' I should not have insisted so much on this, if I did not see such a valuable piece of scripture, as the Song of Solomon, debased by calling it a Pastoral, made up of fiction, and upon that plan quite unintelligible without it. Fiction is surely too harsh a word to apply to any thing of divine composition; and, if once it be admitted, there is no saying where the wild work may end. That Christ is our shepherd, and makes us to rest at noon, (**נוח** in *brightnesses*), is literally true, and undoubtedly certain: why suppose, or bring in fiction? The church had had her *shahar*, her morning, twilight, greyness; and now longs for, and expresses her faith of and in that meridian brightness of light and illumination, which she expected from her shepherd; as she prays in the language of another of her bards, 'O shepherd of Israel, that leadest Joseph like a flock, *shine forth*;' agreeably to the prophetic promise*, which the apocalypst saw realized in vision, in Revel. xxi. 23, 24. where the church is described resting literally in *brightnesses*, in an everlasting noon, kept up by that true source
and

* Psalm lxxx. 1.

† Isaiah lx. throughout.

and 'Father of lights, with whom is no parallax
'nor tropic shadow'?

For why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?—Any difficulty here may be thought to lie in the phrase 'thy companions,' or who they are; 'ἑταίρων σὺ', in the Gr. of the LXX. the brew is חֲבֵרִיד, *habrica*. This is the first time that these companions are spoken of; and tho' they are only once more mentioned², the pastoral sense finds great use for them. It seems they were such as had flocks, and the church, the spouse, was afraid of being entangled (עֲטִיבָה Heb. περιβαλλομένη LXX. 'ope-
'riens super se' Arias—covered, veiled, surrounded) among them. What could they be? The original word *habar*, by use, is to conjoin, associate, &c. and is often taken in an ill sense, as the corresponding Greek 'ἑταίρῳ and 'ἑταιρία are, even so far as to signify enchantment, conjuration³, &c. We have the word again applied to Christ, in Psalm xlv. 7. 'the oil of gladness above (חֲבֵרֶד *habarca*, singular) thy fellows,' as all the translations render it plural: in what sense is the question. We have a key to this, I think, in Psalm xciv. 20. 'Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, יִחְבֹּד, 'be thy *habar*,' συμπροσεσαι σοι, LXX. Compare 2 Cor. vi. 15. 'What concord, συμφωνησις, has
VOL. II. A a ' Christ

¹ St James i. 17.

² Chap. viii. 13.

³ Deut. xviii. 11.—a charmer. Ps. lviii. 5.—charmers charming wisely. Isaiah xlvii. 12.—with thine enchantments.

‘Christ with Belial?’ Belial, singular, like the *habar* in the xlvith Psalm: but such a singular as the devil’s name ¹—‘My name is legion, for we are many.’ Belial, and such like, we know, were set up, or did set up themselves, to be *fellows, associates, &c.* with Christ. This was the core of rottenness in the heathen idolatry; and, on the foundation of this unlawful association, were built their charms, enchantments, &c. But these *fellows* had not the prophetic oil, the oil of gladness: for I do not see that either the psalmist’s expression, or the apostle’s quotation of it ², forbids this acceptance. Indeed we have a *fellow* mentioned to the Lord of hosts that cannot come under this intendment: ‘Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my *fellow*’ ³. Here the Hebrew is *ommi* *ommi* *thi*, *πολιτην μου* LXX. *proximus meus*, my neighbour, which rather confirms than contradicts what I am advancing. These *habri*, or *fellows*, therefore, the Baals and Molochs, and all such, who usurped the names, and intruded themselves into the offices, of Christ, so were literally the antichrists of antiquity ⁴, had their worshippers, their flocks, and that too in great abundance. From these flocks, these *fellowships* of all such false usurping associates, the church prays here to be preserved, to be guided out of their reach, to be directed

¹ St Mark v. 9.

² Heb. i. 9.

³ Zech. xiii. 7.

⁴ 1 St John ii. 18.

rected, led to her beloved, the true, the real, the *only shepherd*'.

VER. 8.—*If thou knowest not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds tents.*

Her prayer, we see, is heard, and a direction granted: but by whom? Not by the virgins; as some paraphrasers allege, but bring no proof for it, as indeed they have none to bring. There is more in the direction than the virgins could grant. The address was to the beloved, and it is the beloved who answers it. He directs her to the 'footsteps of the flock' *בְּעֵקֶב הַצֹּאֵן* amongst the paths, the 'heel-marks of the flock,' singular, and with the emphatic ה, corresponding with the Greek article, the *one* particular flock, distinguished by another word, 'tzan,' from the flocks, herds (*odri* plural) of the companions. The Messiah, Christ, has his heel-marks, as in Psalm lxxxix. 51. 'they have reproached the footsteps of thy Christ;' and again, in Psalm lxxvii. 19. 'thy footsteps are not known, thou leddest thy people like a flock.' This flock, with their shepherd at their head, 'leading them out,' leave footsteps, marks of their course in feeding, to be a direction to followers. And, as Christ's flock has existed from the beginning, these footsteps are old. So says Jeremiah, 'Ask

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' for

¹ 1 St Peter ii. 25;

² St John x. 3.

‘for the old paths’, the footsteps of antiquity; and so St Paul points to the steps (vestigia, traces, heel-marks) ‘of the faith of our father Abraham.’ This was antiquity in Jeremiah’s time; and St Paul refers to it, as a rule to direct the ‘walking’ of Christ’s sheep in all ages.

And feed thy kids beside the shepherds tents.—*משכנות* (*meschnoth*, Heb.) *tabernacles*, the word always used for the sacred tabernacle, the ‘dwelling-place of Jehovah upon earth;’ and distinguished from *אהל* tent, used for any purpose, sacred or common³. These ‘tabernacles’ belong to the *רועים*, the herdmen⁴, the substitutes, servants, feeders, under the *אρχιποιμην*, the chief shepherd⁵, and are called ‘amiable,’ *ידידות*, as connected with *דוד*, David the beloved⁶. Beside them the church is directed to feed her charge; beside these tabernacles, to which the ‘footsteps of the flock’ would guide her. The meaning is plain, and deserves our most serious attention. But why her ‘kids?’ Let me indulge a conjecture here. St Matthew⁷ makes a striking distinction between the sheep and the goats. The people of God in scripture are compared to sheep, and their wanderings described under this figure⁸.
That

¹ Jerem. vi. 16.

² Rom. iv. 12.

³ See Numb. xxiv. 5. Isaiah xxxviii. 12. &c.

⁴ Gen. xiii. 7.

⁵ St Peter v. 1—4.

⁶ Ps. lxxxiv. 1.

⁷ Ch. xxv.

⁸ See Psalm cxix. 176. Isaiah liii. 6. Jerem. l. 17. Ezek. xxxiv. 6.

^h. xviii. 12. &c.

That 'we have erred, and strayed like lost sheep,' is our daily public confession. What if the kids here, the young goats, should be intended to put us in mind that, till we be brought to the shepherds dwellings, we are of the goat kind; and must be led to the holy tabernacle to be 'received' into the congregation of Christ's visible flock,' and denominated his sheep. I hope there is nothing of heresy, whatever of fancy there may be in this conjecture; and as such let it pass.

VER. 9.—*I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariot.*

This stroke of poetic painting is acknowledged to come from the bridegroom, as he is called; and, under the interpretation of a pretty compliment, has been eagerly laid hold of to support the fond notion 'of the marriage with Pharaoh's daughter.' At the same time, these writers are forced to confess, that 'though the mention of Pharaoh's chariot seems 'to favour the notion of the bride being his daughter, yet to a Hebrew woman it would probably 'be a simile of a thing unknown, or known only 'by hearsay.' In this indeed I agree with them, that the Hebrew women had this idea by hearsay, because I find the expression in a triumphant song composed by a Hebrew poet, and sung by the Hebrew women—'The horses of Pharaoh went 'in with his chariots into the sea', &c. And I cannot

cannot help thinking that the simile in the Canticles may be as properly illustrated from the writings of a Moses four hundred years before, as from those of any heathen poet so many hundred years after. For it will not be an easy affair to shew, that any of the Egyptian manners were purposely adopted by the Hebrew writers, in their sacred or inspired compositions, especially such an emblem of bondage and oppression, as all the nation had been always taught to look back to with horror and aversion. But this is not all; the comparison here is in the singular number, though our translation, in part following St Jerom's, has it plural, 'a company of horses,' which cannot well be accounted for. The Hebrew is singular, *רֶכֶבְךָ* *lesusti*, the LXX. has it *τη ἵππῳ μου*, Arias Montanus and Marius Calasio, 'equæ meæ,' 'to my mare.' This is the only place where the word is found in this form, with the feminine termination, and the possessive suffix, *meus*, my or mine. Horses in the plural number are often spoken of in scripture, indefinitely or with the addition of possessives, but always in the regular plural masculine *רֶכֶב* *susim*, *susiu*, *susicha*, &c. his, thy, your, their horses, &c. The paraphrasers I have in my eye lay hold of this singular rendering; and, in confirmation of their plan, draw from it a strange kind of picture of the bridegroom 'gazing fondly on her, and 'praising her graceful appearance, like a 'beautiful 'mare, taught to move with dignity when drawing 'a chariot.' Now, whatever dignity may be about

a beautiful steed, when in a state of nature, bounding away at freedom, as is elegantly described by another eastern pen¹, there is still something that raises the disagreeable idea of drudgery and toil, when we see such a creature sweating and dragging the burden of a chariot. And though some of the translators, Jerom and others, have introduced a more significant peculiarity in the comparison, by rendering the passage, 'I have compared thee to *my* steed in Pharaoh's chariot;' may we not still ask what Solomon's steed had to do in Pharaoh's chariot? Is there taste or regularity in such an unnecessary mixture? Why not yoke a steed of Pharaoh's own to his chariot, if the design was to accommodate the simile to the Egyptian lady's conception? It will be said perhaps, that Solomon began now to have a title to her, and so might very properly call her his own. If so, what business or connexion had she now with Pharaoh or his chariot? The comparison should in that case have run, 'to Pharaoh's steed in *my* chariot.' From the moment she became Solomon's property, his love, &c. she was to bid adieu to Pharaoh and all his concerns, if we will allow the direction of another writer to have any application here—'Hearken, O daughter, and consider, forget thine own people, and thy father's house².' So many improprieties, and unscriptural suppositions, should, I think; lead us to reject the silly, though common conceit

¹ Job xxxix. 19—25.² Psalm xlv. 10.

conceit about Pharaoh's daughter, and to look out for some more solemn and uniform interpretation of this remarkable simile, on which that conceit seems to have been first founded. Such an interpretation presents itself to the unprejudiced eye from the very words themselves, especially as connected with and analagous to what goes before: an interpretation indeed so very devoid of any strain of praise, or metaphorical flight of compliment, that it opens up a quite different meaning, and inculcates a mortifying lesson never to be forgotten. We have seen the bride (to speak in common style) entering upon this sacred stage with a lowly account of herself in a prior state, but rejoicing in the endearments of her *beloved*, and anxious to be further instructed and comforted by him. This humble, modest behaviour he takes hold of with the comparison in question, 'True, O my love, I 'have compared thee; דַּמִּיתִיךָ *damiṭicha*, thought thee 'like to *my* steed in Pharaoh's chariot.' Time was, we know, when this was literally the case; when the steed of Solomon, or (as St Jerom has it, *equitui meo*, to my cavalry), the cavalry, the favourite property of the Messiah, (who delights to ride upon his horses and chariots of salvation, Habak. iii. 8.) was toiling and pulling in Pharaoh's chariot, when, without a metaphor, the Israel of God, the flock

¹ See Psalm 1. 21. in the Hebrew, where there is likewise a peculiar and most emphatic construction.

flock of the Jehovah-shepherd¹, were confined to, and drudging in, the brick kilns of Egypt. And, if the Egyptian bondage be, as is justly believed, a type of natural servitude to sin—Egypt, and to satan—Pharaoh, we have here a most pertinent and striking allusion, in strong emblematical language, and under a well-known figure, to the miserable state of mankind by nature, not to any inherent excellency or commendation about them; an allusion which, from a Hebrew pen, and to a Hebrew people, could not be mistaken, while they remembered how frequently their prophets and bards had put them in mind of it, and with what fervency their Redeemer on every occasion repeatedly assumes the emphatic appellation of ‘The Lord thy God, who brought thee forth from the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.’ So little is there in this simile of the song, when compared with, and explained by, other places of scripture, to infer compliment, or countenance the marriage-fiction.

I have compared thee, O my love, &c. The Hebrew word רעייתי, *roiti*, has not the idea of love in it. It comes from רעה *roah*, to feed, and in the masculine form is rendered neighbour, friend, &c. Here it is feminine, and is the usual title, by which the beloved addresses his ‘fairest among women,’ through the whole of this poem; not ‘my love,’ as we read it, but ‘my neighbour;’ ἡ πλησιον μου, LXX. VOL. II. B b ‘my

¹ Psalm lxxx. &c.

² See 1st Cor. x. 12.

' my friend,' ' amica mea' Latin, literally ' by derivation,' ' my fed one,' whom I feed, nourish, take care of', so not only the object of, but likewise the profiter by, my love. And here let me once for all observe the instructive propriety of the two capital appellations in the mouths of the two conspicuous personages, through the whole of this sacred poem. He calls her *roiti*, ' my fed one ; she calls him דודי, *dudi*, ' my beloved.' Do not these two significant names or titles contain, in their own sense, and point out to us, the particular attitudes in which the two personages brought in here, Christ and his church, stand to one another, and what the respective offices of each are in this blessed connexion? His office is feeding, ruling, governing; her office is love, ' Thou shalt love the Lord thy God ; this is the first and the great commandment'.—' The greatest of these is love'. Let me further take notice of the gracious manner, in which the BELOVED here makes his first appearance. She had been praying to him, in the 7th verse, for his direction and guidance.—' Tell me, O ' thou whom my soul loveth,' &c. This affectionately dutiful prayer he immediately answers, ' If ' thou knowest not, O thou fairest among women,' &c. ver. 8. He grants her request, before he brings to her mind the sorrowful, but necessary remembrance of her former condition under Egyptian thral-

† See Psalm lxxix. 13. and xcv. 7.

² St Matth. xxii. 37.

3 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

thralldom, and comforts her, we see, before he humbles her. What an admirable condescension, and with what returns of gratitude and love to be received by us! These and such like alluring methods are the ‘cords of love,’ by which he draws us to himself. Who would not wish to run, when thus drawn?

VER. 10.—*Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels,
thy neck with chains of gold.*

The *jewels* and the *gold* here are additions: The LXX. have it, ‘thy cheeks are comely as the turtle’s, thy neck as collars. And St Jerom the same, somewhat indeed more literally, but equally undetermined, ‘comely with rows,’ נָאֵחַ בְּתוּרִים, *navu beturim*, made comely, (the verb being passive, as in ver. 5.) in, with, by rows, so the word *tur* signifies, say the lexicons, likewise turtle, order, state, and any of these it might be here. There is a well known word similar to this from יָרָה, to instruct; תִּרְהָה *turah*, ‘the law,’ feminine; our word here may mean something like this, instructions, instructors, &c. What the word for *chains* in the next clause, *harizim*, is, cannot well be ascertained, as it is of uncertain derivation, and only found here: though the Rabbins, as Buxtorf and Calasio tell us, make much use of it, to signify ‘collections out of the sacred ‘books,’ or studied compositions in what we would

B b 2

call

call blank verse. The import therefore of the description here must be collected from other places of scripture. Moses ordered the people to have the record of the paschal institution, 'for a token upon the hand, and for a memorial', for a frontlet ' (ver. 16.) between the eyes;' and renews the injunction in Deut. vi. 8. in allusion to which, Solomon advises², 'forget not my *turah*, my law,— ' ver. 3. bind them about thy neck :' as he had promised the consequence (chap. i. 8, 9.) 'hear the instructions of thy father, and forsake not the *turah*, ' law of thy mother, for they shall be ornaments of ' grace unto thy head, (so comeliness to thy cheeks), ' and *chains* about thy neck.' This gives some light to the comeliness before us, and shews what it is, and whence it comes, as is more fully exemplified in the next verse.

VER. 11.—*We will make to thee borders of gold,
with studs of silver.*

The change of number here has led to the fancy of changing the person of the speaker in the last verse, and employing the virgins or companions in the business here intended: But the word נִשְׂחָה, *noshe*, we will make, might have brought to mind the first time we meet with it³. The Elohim, God said, *noshe*, let us (we will) make, &c. Or, if this shall

² Exod. xiii. 9.

¹ Prov. iii. 1.

³ Gen. i. 26.

shall be objected to, (though I think it no strange doctrine that the whole Trinity is employed in adorning the church), let it be remembered, that the hero of the song, the acknowledged speaker in the former verse, is a *συνθετον τι*, as Origen calls him, a compound person of Deity and humanity, and so may properly take to himself this plural form; as we are sure he does in his own person undeniably, either in this or the other acceptation, for I will not decide¹, ‘I say unto thee, *We* speak that *we* do know, and *we* testify that *we* have seen, and ye receive not our witness;’ so that I have authority enough to continue the speaker, and not give the virgins more to do than lies to their hand. It is the action of ornamenting the church that is here spoken of. Gold and silver are emblematical; the gold of majesty and splendour, the silver of whiteness and purity. The borders are the *turim* above-mentioned; and their being said to be of gold needs be no surprise to such as have read and admired the ‘golden verses of Pythagoras,’ when they remember, as I hope every christian does, that a greater than Pythagoras is here. What our translation renders studs, is *נקודות*, *nequeduth*, the spots that were to distinguish Jacob’s sheep from Laban’s². The LXX. translate it *σηματα*, marks. May not this start a hint as to the meaning of St Paul’s strange expression³, ‘I bear in my body the marks,

¹ St John iii. 11.² Gen. xxx. 32.³ Gal. vi. 17.

‘marks, *σηματα*, of the Lord Jesus?’ What the apostle meant by this, I will not take upon me positively to say, though, by his way of mentioning them, it would appear he was not ashamed of them, but esteemed them to be *nequeduth keseph*, (our studs of silver), *σηματα επιθυμιας*, ‘marks of desire,’ as the word for silver, *keseph*, is often used in the verbal form, to signify*. We have another New Testament writer pointing to something like this, with a view indeed to an opposite purpose, and under a different word²—‘he causeth all—to get *χαραγμα*, ‘a mark;’ and if there be, as is universally agreed there is, a similarity both of subject and expression, between the prophet Ezekiel, and the apoclypt St John, we may meet with something in the prophet to state over against the apoclypt’s *χαραγμα*, and to offer some little illustration of both Solomon’s and St Paul’s *σηματα*³. ‘Go through the city, and set a (*וּת* *tu*. Heb. *σηמיון* LXX.) mark upon the foreheads⁴, &c. but come ‘not near any upon whom is the mark.’ I shall not lay stress upon the Rabbinical cabala about this *tu* or mark; I have better and more ancient authority concerning it in Rev. vii. 3.—‘till we have ‘sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads,’ and more particularly what this seal is, in ch. xiv. 1. ‘There were with the lamb an hundred forty and

¹ See Gen. xxxi. 30. Job xiv. 15. Zephan. ii. 1.

² Rev. xiii. 16. 17. and xiv. 9.

³ Ezek. ix. 4.

⁴ Ezek. ix. 6.

‘ and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads ;’ these are certainly figurative of something by way of ornament, and whether exactly applicable or not, will appear not a very impertinent allusion to the golden *turim* and silver *nequeduth* of our song. This same Solomon, in his valuable collection of Proverbs, gives us one, not very distant either in expression or application from the passage before us ‘—‘ A word fitly spoken’ (and what word more deserving of that character than the word of the *turah*, law of God?) ‘ is like ‘ apples of gold in pictures’ (cases, ὀρμισκῶ LXX. the Greek word for *chains* in the 10th verse) ‘ of silver ;’ so here, ‘ we will make for thee golden ‘ orders,’ (apples of gold), ‘ with silver marks,’ (the cases of silver), ‘ the real intrinsic worth, the *το αγαθον*, of the gold, set off and recommended by the becoming whiteness and fair lustre, the *το καλον* of the silver, and the silver conversation worthy of, and in so far ornamental to, the golden gospel of Christ’. All this adorning of the church we have fully described to us in most beautifully picturesque language, quite consonant to the general language of the song—‘ I anointed thee with oil, I clothed ‘ thee with broidered work, and shod thee with ‘ badgers skins, and I girded thee about with fine ‘ linen, and covered thee with silk ; I decked thee ‘ also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy ‘ hands, and a *chain* upon thy neck, and a jewel on ‘ thy

1 Prov. xxv. 11.

2 Philip. i. 27.

‘thy forehead, and rings in thine ears, and a crown of beauty on thy head: thus wast thou decked with gold and silver—and thy beauty was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith ADONI JEHOVAH’—the Adoni who sits on the right hand of Jehovah², the Jehovah who was Adoni to David³, the Adon whom the faithful always sought and delighted in⁴, the appointed Lord and Christ to the whole house of Israel⁵. The prophet’s rapturous description is all applied to the Jerusalem of Canaanitish nativity, sprung from an Amorite father and Hittite mother, so partaking of the corruption, and but for the intervention of the true, the real Solomon, exposed to the misery of both. No hint is given of virgins or companions decorating, or of any assistants in the ornamenting work. It is ADONI JEHOVAH who does the whole; all is his work, and to him alone be the glory!

VER. 12.—*While the king sitteth at his table, my spike-nard sendeth forth the smell thereof.*

This is from the church, as the address to the KING testifies, and expresses her grateful acknowledgements of those high and unmerited favours, those royal decorations with gold and silver, as her so immediately calling him *the King* indicates her meaning

¹ Ezek. xvi. 9—14.

² Psalm cx. 1.

³ Psalm xvi. 2.

⁴ Malachi iii. 1.

⁵ Acts ii. 36. &c.

meaning, and in conformity to Ezekiel's language afterwards, 'Thou didst prosper into a kingdom'; but literally, and more pertinently, with respect to the person thus addressed, 'Thou wast advanced to 'be a queen;' and who could do this but a king? This is above the character of shepherd and shepherdess, and rises far beyond the idea of what we meet with in 'Eclogue or Pastoral.' *While the king sitteth at his table.*—Sitting is not particularly mentioned in the text; and the time too is equally indefinite, and may be either present or future, which justifies what I have already observed, that the poem looks both backward and forward. But why 'his table?' The Hebrew is **בִּמְסָבָה** *bemesabu*, in the Greek of the LXX. *ἐν ἀνακλισίῃ*, in the Latin of Montanus and Calasio 'in circuitu.' The root 'sab,' is to be or go *round about*, and is applied to Jehovah, and to creatures, *sababiu*, his circulators, encompassers round about, agents in a good or bad sense, as the context directs. Our word *mesab*, is used for 'round about carvings'; for the 'turning round of 'a cloud'; for the 'turning leaves of doors'; but never that we can find for a *table*. Besides the king is said to be **בּ**, *in it*, not **ל**, or **בְּ**, *at, or beside it*. So it would seem to be *in his round*, in what he was going about, the *round* of his purpose, counsel, love, or in the midst of his *schemes*, &c. While there, the church says, 'My spikenard gives its

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¹ Ezek. xvi. 13.

³ Job xxvii. 12.

² 1 Kings vi. 29.

⁴ Ezek. xli. 24.

‘smell :’ which was literally fulfilled, as we read in St Matth. xxvi. 7. St Mark xiv. 3. when the woman poured her precious *spikenard* on his head. And perhaps it has been this real history that has led our translators, following St Jerom and the Vulgate, who have it ‘*in accubitu,*’ to the idea of a table in the passage before us; but without any ground or necessity for such a confined restriction. The king was then in his *mesab*, in one of his rounds, his *grand* round of dying love; and the poor woman, he himself says, had a view to this. How far the *spikenard* in the song has any reference to the bride’s ‘*virtuous actions,*’ as some commentators explain it, may be gathered from this New Testament affair. And if the woman be that Mary Magdalene, out of whom ‘went seven devils,’ as is generally and upon good grounds supposed, we cannot but see, especially from our Lord’s own words, in St Luke vii. 36—50. what the church’s *spikenard* is an emblem of; not of what we commonly call virtuous actions, but of humility and self-abasement, of love and thankfulness to the KING, for designing and *going about*, for accomplishing and *bringing about*, the great work of our redemption. ‘Her sins which are many are forgiven: Therefore she loved much.’ See above on v. 9. and what follows.

VER.

VER. 13.—*A bundle of myrrh is my beloved unto me :
he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.*

Still continuing her deep sense of the King's wonderful and undeserved condescension, which now emboldens her for the first time to call him *her beloved*, דודי *dudi*, my David, my love, active or passive, my *loving, loved* one. It is well known how eminently this appellation belongs to Christ, and what a bright type of this true *King*, the temporal king David was. To Christ, or concerning him, under this name, are most of the psalms directed—לדודי, To David ; as this song is under another name —‘To Solomon.’ Nor needs it be any surprise to us, that this GREAT ONE should be represented under different names, when we remember in what different characters of connexion He stands to his church. I might here, if I could allow myself to fall in with the common method of accounting for sacred mysteries by the assistance of heathen mimicry, bring in the acknowledged Pagan practice of giving different names to the different attributes and operations of the same deity, either from the scripture testimonies of Baal, and Chemosh, and Moloch, &c. or from the still grosser corruptions of later antiquity, with their god of war Mars, of wisdom Apollo, of exhilaration Bacchus, &c. But I have no need of this. Our divine oracles, when studied with attention, and under the assurance of their inspiration, do, in and from themselves, clear up their own descriptions of Christ to

‘rishment,’ which the idolaters primarily, not secondarily, as they ought to have done, attributed to the material heavens, under a variegated representation of multimammias, ‘images with ‘many paps;’ and which therefore Jehovah, the true God, reclaims by the same word to himself. This is the radical idea of the phrase here, ‘my breasts;’ and what the church, the speaker, means by it, is worth the enquiring after. The phrase seems to indicate something peculiar to the church, as such, from an expression in this same song, which I must anticipate, ‘We have a little ‘sister, and she has no breasts’.¹ By this little sister interpreters have no scruple to understand the Gentiles in their unconverted state, as a young girl before her breasts are fashioned and made firm². So, what can it be similar to the breasts of a woman, which are two, that the church has, and the Gentiles want? Does not this bring to our minds the idea of the *two sacraments*, especially under the character of pourers out; the one pouring out water for purification, the other pouring out wine for nourishment: an allusion which seems to be warranted by what we read in Isaiah lxvi. 7—11. ‘That ye may suck and be satisfied with the breasts ‘of her consolations.’ There is no harm, I suppose, in adducing Isaiah to illustrate Solomon. And if this explication hold, we see what the church’s breasts are, and whence the ‘blessings of the

¹ Chap. viii. 8.

² Ezek. xvi. 7.

‘the breasts’ (part of Jacob’s benediction to his favourite Joseph¹) do only flow; not from any inherent virtue or fund of nourishment in themselves, which would be falling back to the perversion of the old apostates, (which Moses so warmly exclaims against Deut. xxxii. 17.), and literally sacrificing to, worshipping, breasts, not God. But from the *tzerur ha mur*, the myrrh bundle, with all its beneficial effluences and energetic qualities, inherent in, and communicated by, the beloved, residing, lodging, dwelling in them², and emitting, exhaling, dispensing, his power and virtue, &c. unto them³.

VER. 14.—*My beloved is unto me a cluster of camphire among the vineyards of Engedi.*

Another rapturous acknowledgement, and in the same allusive style, of more favours and blessings from her *beloved*. Camphire, we are told, is a great preservative, and exquisitely odoriferous: but whether this be what we now call camphire, is a question. The word is *חַכְפֵּי*, *hakepher*, which here, and in ch. iv. 13. the LXX. render *κυπρίδος*, and the Latin, *cyparissus*, as on the margin of our Bibles, cypress. The radical idea is ‘to cover;’ and the first place in which we meet with it is Gen. vi. 14. as something to cover Noah’s ark with, within and without, which our translators, following the Greek and

¹ Gen. xlix. 25.

² St Matth. xviii. 26.

³ St Luke viii. 46.

and Latin versions, have rendered ‘pitch.’ It is the word used for the mercy-seat¹, or covering of the ark of the covenant, and seems to signify atonement, propitiation, pardon, &c. through the whole of the Old Testament. So says the church here, ‘My beloved is to me, *askul, hakepher*, a cluster of ‘covering, my covering, my atonement, pardon, or ‘propitiation’.’ ‘In the vineyards of Engedi.’ Engedi, we know, was the name of a real place near Jericho; and famous, as travellers tell us, for its aromatic shrubs. The name is interpreted the ‘kid’s eye,’ upon what account is not easy to say, and is used by way of typical allusion in Ezekiel’s vision of the holy waters, ch. xlvii. 10, ‘The fish-ers shall stand upon it from Engedi, (the eye of ‘the kids), even unto En-eglaim, (the eye of the ‘calves);’ but in what meaning, or with what tendency to our present purpose, does not appear. There is something in the Mosaic history that seems to offer a little elucidation; it is in Numbers xi. 7. — ‘And the manna was as the seed of ‘coriander, (Heb. גַּד, *gad*, LXX. κορις), and the ‘flour of it (עֵינֵי *en-u*, מַדְּגָל LXX. ‘the eye’ marg.) ‘like bdellium.’ Here we have our two component words, עֵינֵי-גַד, *en-ged*, colour and coriander, taken to describe the typical food of the church, called manna: And when we remember the wonderful nature and many mysterious qualities of this manna,

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¹ Exod. xxv. 17.

² See Rom. iii. 25. 1 St John ii. 2, and iv. 10. &c.

na, whence it came, and what, or rather whom it represented', it will not, I hope, be thought too great a stretch or luxuriance of fancy, to apply the description of the manna by Moses, especially being in words so exactly the same, to the church's description of her beloved in this place of our song; and to read this clause, 'in the vineyards of Engedi,' as spoken of, and relative to the *dudi*, thus; 'My beloved is to me a camphire covering, cluster, he is, עֵנְדִי *engedi*, my *en-ged*, (what the coriander colour represents to me), כַּרְמִי *be-karm-i*, in 'my vineyard.' In plain language, 'My beloved is my propitiation, he is my manna, my heavenly nourisher, in my course of labouring to cultivate 'my formerly neglected vineyard.' The rules of grammar do not oppose this interpretation, so it cannot be rejected for being ungrammatical; and I do not see how the spiritual sense can be discovered without it, or something like it.

VER. 15.—*Behold thou art fair, my love, thou art fair, thou hast dove's eyes.*

The feminine appellation here, *roithi*, my love, ascertains the change of the speaker, and puts this endearing compliment into the mouth of the *beloved*. 'Behold thou art fair,' repeated too, adds strength to, and heightens the impression. If we consider the poem, as one continued dialogue, we

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* See, *inter alia*, St John vi. 30—58.

may observe from the connexion, that this rapture of commendation is a condescending return to the church's grateful acknowledgments of her obligations to, and trust in, her *beloved*, in conformity to the gracious promise, 'them that honour me, I will 'honour'.' And this observation will be confirmed by what follows—'thou hast dove's eyes,' or literally, and according to the LXX. 'thy eyes are 'doves.' We cannot but take notice how frequently, and with what emphasis, the hero of this poem, in his expressions of love, delights to compare his fair one to this pretty creature the dove¹. There is surely a reason for this comparison. The Hebrew for dove is יונה, *ionah*, alluding to its innocence, simplicity and meekness; so a fit emblem of what Christ is, and what his church ought to be². 'Learn of me,' says he, 'for I am meek;' and more particularly, 'be ye harmless' (ἀκεραιοί, simple, unmixt) 'as doves³.' Besides, this creature has one peculiar quality, by which it is distinguished, and that is, its constancy in love, and faithfulness to its mate; and scripture warns us, how much danger there is in this respect, from the eyes being allowed to rove. So says Job⁴, 'I have made a 'covenant with mine eyes, why then should I 'think upon a maid?' So our Saviour observes⁵, 'Whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her,' &c.

¹ 1 Sam. ii. 30.

² Ch. ii. 14. iv. 1. v. 2. vi. 9.

³ St Matth. xi. 29.

⁴ Ch. x. 16.

⁵ Job xxxi. 1.

⁶ St Matth. v. 28.

&c. ‘and if thy right eye offend thee,’ &c. ‘the light (candlestick, or torch) of the body is the eye¹.’ The dove’s eyes therefore are commendable, for their being fixed and settled on the beloved object, not going astray or roving after other lovers, like the eyes full of adultery², or going after idols³. In this sense the church is here said to have ‘dove-eyes;’ that is, her eyes, thoughts, desires, and delights, are stedfastly and irremoveably fixed upon her *beloved*, giving him all the glory of her endowments, her graces, and perfections, not looking fondly into herself, and not foolishly wantoning after strangers. Thus she is fair; this is her beauty; this makes her beauty commendable—‘Thou art fair my love, thou hast dove-eyes.’

VER. 16.—*Behold thou art fair, my beloved, yea pleasant; also our bed is green.*

The church echoes back the commendation to her *Beloved*: To him it belongs essentially, to her by communication. Thou art fair, *dudi*, yea pleasant, נעים, *noim*, the participle hiphil, by rule of the jod in the third order, so ‘making pleasant;’ as צדיק *tzadiq*, the justifier, קדש *quedesh*, the sanctifier, and many more such derivatives, which should be carefully attended to, as giving a noble turn to

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¹ St Matth. vi. 22.

² 2 St Peter ii. 14. Gen. xxxix. 7.

³ Ezek. vi. 9. xviii. 12. xx. 24. xxxiii. 25.

most of those passages where this peculiarity of the Hebrew idiom occurs. 'Thou art fair, my beloved, thou art the pleasant-making one.' A joyful and just confession, whence all her pleasures, delights, every thing agreeable to her, or in her, do flow; from him, who is not only fair and pleasant in himself, but is also the cause, source, or fountain of fairness, desirableness, and pleasantness, to his saints. 'At, or in, thy right hand are ^{נְנוּמֶיךָ} *nomuth*, pleasures, pleasantnesses', &c. 'May the ^{תְּהִי} *the* beauty, or pleasantness, of the Lord our God be upon us*.' So prays the church there in terms of her declaration here, corresponding with the particular description in the 16th of Ezekiel, and addressed to the same person. It is *Adoni Jahovah* in the prophet, it is *Adoni Aleinu* in the Psalm: He is the *dudi* of the song, the Lord our God who puts his 'beauty' upon us, whose 'pleasures' we expect for evermore. 'Also our bed is green.' *Bed*, is too restricted; the word ^{מִשְׁכָּנִי} *resh*, is properly a resting-place, whether on bed, couch, arbour, &c. ^{רֶנְנָה} *ronnah*, green, is applied to trees, flourishing, or verdant; so descriptive of joy and festivity, in any resting position, and spiritually pointing to the verdure, or fertility, which the church enjoys in every state, by communion with, and derivation from, her beloved.

VER.

* Psalm xvi. 11.

2 Psalm xc. 17.

VER. 17.—*The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir.*

The connexion seems to continue the female-speaker, 'our bed, our house,' either expressing 'community of goods' with the original proprietor *dudi*, or speaking of herself diffusively as before¹; and as an apostle could say², 'We have an 'house not made with hands.' This of the apostle, I think, points to the house here before us; and the choice of the emblems is admirably descriptive. The beams (the roof in general)³ of this house are cedars. Every one knows what frequent mention the scripture makes of cedars. They are called⁴ 'goodly cedars,' literally according to the LXX. *καθ' οὗς τὰ θεῶν*, marg. 'cedars of God;' they are his property, or materials for his use. The temple, God's house, is called a house of cedar. Cedar is the most durable wood that is known, so a very proper ingredient in 'the house of God's building.' 'Our rafters of fir.' So the Latin has it 'abietes,' firs, and the LXX *κυπαρισσοί*, cypresses, all without any certainty. The word for 'firs,' and in conjunction with cedars, in all other places, is *ברשים*, *brushim*: here, and only here, it is *ברתים*, *bruthim*, with the *tau* instead of the *shin*, which two letters never exchange with one another; and by its formation with the final *tau*, it may be traced to

¹ See ver. iv.

³ Gen. xix. 8.

² 2 Cor. v. 1.

⁴ Psalm lxxx. 10.

to the root בִּר, *bar*, to purify or cleanse; from whence comes the so much contended and much misunderstood word בְּרִית, *berith*, which we read everywhere *covenant*, except in Jerem. ii. 22. and Malachi iii. 2. where the context has forced the translations into the radical idea of cleansing, and to render the word 'soap,' which has not the least affinity with 'covenant.' There is a famous text in Ezekiel, where our translation spoils the beautifully expressive allusion in the Hebrew, which delights in such significant terms. 'I will bring you into the 'bond of הַבְּרִית, *haberith*, the covenant, purification, 'בְּרֻחִי, *vebruthi*, and I will purge out from you'; &c. The word *covenant* darkens the sense here, as there is no correspondence of ideas between *covenant* and *purging*, which the easy transition in the Hebrew from *brith* to *bruthi*, immediately following, so clearly indicates, and which therefore one might think the prophet had in his view. Similar to this formation of the verb *bruthi*, I will purge, is our word *bruthim*, carrying in it the idea of purging, cleansing, &c. and, if it was designed, (as by its apposition to cedars it seems to have been) to signify some kind of wood, it might have been rendered 'cleansed wood.' So we come to the meaning of this fine piece of figurative description, by whomever spoken; and I cannot put it into better words than those of St Paul², 'We have a 'building of God, a house not made with hands, 'eternal in the heavens.' Of God's building indeed—

¹ Ezek. xx. 37, 38.

² 2 Cor. v. 1.

deed—‘ whose builder and maker is God¹,’ yet *εχομεν*, ‘ we have it :’ it is ours by gift, it belongs to us, and is (as another apostle speaks of it under the metaphor of an inheritance, and in terms explanatory of the passage before us) ‘ incorruptible and unde-
‘ filed,’ the *bruthim* rafters, ‘ and that fadeth not
‘ away,’ the cedar beams, ‘ reserved in heaven for
‘ us ².’ ‘ I will dwell in the house of the Lord
‘ for ever ³.’

¹ Heb. xi. 10.

² 1 St Peter i. 4.

³ Psalm xxiii. 6. Compare St John xiv. 2. 3.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

VER. 1.—*I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.*

HERE is an elegant, and what may be called a 'florid' description, and in language that carries a double, but not contrary meaning. The rose and lily, or whatever the Hebrew words signify, were typical of joy and rejoicing: 'The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose'.¹ 'Israel shall grow as the lily'.² So the meaning will be, that she was indeed blossoming, and made a pleasant figure, as the rose and lily do for a while, but that like them, her beauty was fading, and ready to decay under every nipping-blast. Sharon was the name of a country in the land of Gilead³, where David had herds feeding⁴; and seems to have been remarkable for its fertility, from the prophet's denunciation concerning it—'Sharon is like a wilderness'.⁵ The other word, עמק, *om-quim*, vallies, signifies deep, and is mostly used in a melan-

¹ Isaiah xxxv. i.

² Hosea xiv. 5.

³ 1 Chron. v. 16.

⁴ 1 Chron. xxvii. 29.

⁵ Isaiah xxxiii. 9.

melancholy sense, as in Ps. lxi. 2. 'I am come
 'into deep waters;' Ps. cxxx. 1. 'Out of the deeps
 'have I called;' and in Prov. ix. 18. 'The deeps
 'of hell,' &c. so conveys the idea of danger or op-
 pression. The church, therefore, under these two
 similes, denotes her present condition, flourishing
 indeed for the time, like these two fair flowers, and
 attracting the eye of every beholder, but in dan-
 ger of being blown down like a *rose* on a plain, or
 overflown like a *lily* in a marsh. As a prophet ad-
 monishes us—'the goodness thereof fadeth as a
 'flower of the field'. Or, if we will trace the
 words *rose* and *lily* to their radical meaning, we
 shall discover another interpretation equally conso-
 nant to scripture, and expressive of the church's
 character. The word for 'rose,' *חַבְצֵלֶת*, *habtzeleth*, is
 not properly a derivative, but a compound, and
 may be resolved into its two components, or roots,
חַב, *hab*, to hide, conceal, and *צֶל*, *tsel*, a shade, or
 something (flower or plant) blossoming, couching,
 sheltering under a shade for protection, defence, or
 cover. The 'lily,' *שׁוֹשַׁנָּה*, *shoshanneth*, comes from
שׁוֹשׁ *shush*, to rejoice or be glad; so means the joy-
 ful, rejoicing thing. In application to the church,
 she flourishes, thrives, grows, though not in the
 eye of the world, yet, *habbah*, concealed, hidden*,
 ('the hiding of his power', 'hide thyself for a
 'moment') under the *tsel*, shadow of her protec-
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* Isaiah xl. 6. quoted by an apostle—1 St Peter i. 24.

2 Habak. iii. 4.

3 Isaiah xxvi. 20.

‘tor’, and *shoshanneth*, rejoicing, joyful, in the ‘midst of *omquim*,’ depressions, humiliations, or persecutions¹. Either of these senses separately, or both conjunctly, belong to the church, and may very properly be intended by her; by the church, I say, in general, and by every faithful humble member of her in particular. I might likewise observe here the peculiar beauty of this comparison, as coming from a Hebrew poet’s pen. We read in the historical book of 1 Chron. xxvii. 29. among the officers and private wealth of the temporal David, that he had ‘herds feeding ‘in Sharon, and in the’ *omquim*, ‘the valleys.’ These seem to have been his property, a part of his crown-lands, belonging to him as king, and directly under his management. Is there not a visible allusion from our bard here, to that seemingly not very important piece of history? And if so, may we not learn from it, that the ‘*Sharon*,’ the fertile plain, and the ‘*omquim*,’ the depressed low situations, which the church, as a rose and lily, is here said to be connected with, must be of her David, her Beloved’s appointment, and under the inspection of his *shithrai*, governor, and *shaphat*, judge³, before she can be the covered thing, the rose, in the one, or the rejoicing thing, the lily, in

¹ See, *inter alia multa*, Psalm xvii. 8. xxxvi. 7. lvii. 1. lxiii. 7. xci. 1.

² St Matth. v. 12. Rom. xxi. 12. Col. i. 24. 1 St Peter iv. 13.

³ See the text—1 Chron. xxvii. 29.

in the other. But I shall leave the improvement of this to further meditation, and proceed.

VER. 2.—*As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.*

How graciously, how endearingly, is every confession of the church answered by her beloved? This answer speaks commendation, and carries instruction. *Thorns*, we remember, though under another word, were part of the original curse; and the church is put in mind of this, as a necessary caution, never to be forgotten, but always taken along and looked back to; with what view needs not be explained. Our word here חִמּוֹ, *huhim*, is by use, of extensive signification, and has in it the idea of entangling. It is something ‘to bore the jaws of the Leviathan with’; it is ‘my hook in thy nose’; with chains into the land of Egypt’. Our own rendering, *thorns*, keeps up this idea, and this I take to be the principal thing meant here. As the lily, the tender, delicate flower, among thorns, not only excelling them in beauty, but likewise in danger of being entangled, hampered, and torn by their prickles, so is ‘my love among the daughters,’ the church in the midst of the gay world, the lovers of pleasure; surpassing them far in real accomplishments, but still surrounded with numberless entanglements.

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¹ Job xli. 2.

² 2 Kings xix. 28. Isaiah xxxvii. 29.

³ Ezek. xix. 4.

tanglements; and, like the seed that fell among thorns', "in peril of being choked with ' cares, ' and riches, and pleasures of this life.' What a noble lesson! and how needful to be fervently inculcated, and seriously attended to, both for the increase of humility, (' Rejoice with trembling,' Psalm ii. 11. the *lily* condition, with the *thorn* situation, compare Philip. ii. 12.) and to keep us in that state so pressingly recommended to us, and so very necessary for us, ' Watch and pray ' !

VER. 3.— *As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.*

The church appears again in praise of, and dependance upon her beloved. The comparison is drawn from trees, tall, stately, towering figures, herself a poor creeping fading flower. Trees, we know, were of early universal use in sacred things. There was scarce a tree of any note but had its particular signification; and idolaters soon assigned such and such a tree to each of their several gods. This seems to have been stolen out of Paradise. The ' tree of life ' is still in christian remembrance, and the ' tree of knowledge of ' good and evil ' will not soon be forgotten. These were emblems, so were the oak, the olive, the vine,

¹ St Luke viii. 14.

² St Matth. xxvi. 41.

vine, &c. What the **תפוח**, *tapukh*, here is, which we read 'apple-tree,' is not so very clear. Commentators will have it to be the citron, and it may be so. By what follows, it appears to be a fruit-tree, and of a large size. It has affinity with, and seems to be derived from the root **נפח**, *nephah*, to blow, or breathe, which is what the Creator did to Adam, when he **נשם**, *ipakh*, 'breathed into his nostrils: the 'breath of life'.' The LXX. have rendered it *πνευσι*, which is the word that the evangelist St John* applies to the action of Jesus upon his apostles, when 'he breathed on them, and said unto 'them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' Our song resembles it to the expansion of air'—'Till the 'day break, or *διαπνευσαι*, blow, and in ch. iv. 16. 'southwind blow, *διαπνευσαν*, upon my garden.' The *tapukh*, therefore, 'apple-tree,' derived from this root, must signify some eminently precious, rich, juicy fruit tree, far preferable to the 'trees of the 'wood,' the wild barren trees, &c. 'So is my beloved among the sons.' The sons of what? See Ps. xxix. 1. 'Give unto the Lord **בני-אלים** ye sons of the mighty.' So our Bibles and Pagninus have it. The LXX. read it, 'Bring, O ye sons of God, 'bring young rams,' &c. So again, 'Who among 'the *beni alim*, the sons of the mighty, can be likened unto Jehovah?' The LXX. have it *ἐν υἱοῖς Θεοῦ*, Pagninus and the Vulgate, in *filiis deorum*. And

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* Gen. ii. 7.

* St John xx. 22.

3 Chp. ii. 17.

4 Psalm lxxxix. 6.

our Prayer Book, ‘among the gods’.¹ In these places, we see what is meant by the ‘sons’ in this verse—the gods, the mighty ones, objects of heathen adoration, the lofty swelling trees² of *ior*, the wood of idolatry, which made a shew, but had no fruit, could do no service, could give no nourishment or refreshment³, so could not be likened to the Beloved, the *Tapuhh*, the fruitful, delicious, inspiring tree; which was not only possessed of every valuable quality in itself, but was likewise capable of improving, and would in time actually improve, convert, sanctify the forest⁴, according to the gracious prophecy⁵, ‘Till I find out a place for ‘Jehovah, an habitation (literally, *tabernacle*, σκηνωμα, St John i. 14) for the mighty one of Jacob; lo, we ‘heard of it at Ephrata⁶, and found it in the fields ‘of ‘*ior*’ the wood.’ Now was the *ior*, the wood or forest, made an Ephrata, a fruitful spot, by the presence of the *Tapuhh*, apple-tree of Jehovah, displaying *nupakh*, blowing, breathing forth odours, sweetness, powers, either to fructify or blast the other trees.

I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.—The theme, we see, was

¹ See also Psalm lxxxii. 6, 7.

² Isaiah ii. 13.

³ 1 Cor. viii. 4.—‘an idol is nothing.’

⁴ Isa. xxix. 17. xxxii. 15.

⁵ Psalm cxxxii. 5, 6.

⁶ See Gen. xxxv. 19. xlviii. 7. and the prophecy of Micah v. 2. fulfilled St Matth. ii. 6.

was too enchanting, the idea too ravishing to be soon lost sight of; 'I was delighted and sat;' so says the Hebrew, 'I was delighted,' חמדתי, *hhamadti*. The word is applied to the trees of Eden¹, 'every tree that is pleasant;' 'to the goodly (marg. desirable) raiment of Esau, the first-born².' It is spoken of God 'delighting to dwell³.' 'The desire of all nations shall come⁴.' The apostates carried off this title; and the great idol of the alcoran bears the name מרמח, *Mohammed*, or as we improperly pronounce it, Mahomet. We see therefore what the church's 'delight' was, and what was her view. 'I was delighted,' she says, וישבתי, *veishabti*, and sat.' 'Sat down,' as we read it, confines the idea. It is settledness, dwelling, residence, in opposition to moving, wandering, or roving. *Under his shadow*.—This is what we may call a favourite phrase in scripture, and always points to its proper meaning; it was in this 'shadow' that her delight was; here the church dwelt and dwells. 'They that dwell under his shadow,' ישיבי, *ishabi*, our word here, 'the sitters.' 'To be safe 'under the shadow of thy wings,' was the Psalmist's great comfort⁵. This is called a most significant metaphor; but it has its foundation in a most important reality, which discovers its significance. That well known, and particularly sacred

¹ Gen. ii. 9.² Gen. xxvii. 15.³ Psalm lxxviii. 17.⁴ Hagg. ii. 7.⁵ Hosea xiv. 7. quoted above.⁶ Psalm xvii. 9. and xxxvi. 7. &c.

cred ornament of the Jewish worship, the CHERUBIM, if not the representative, were the dwelling-place of Jehovah, יְשִׁב־דְּרֵסִים, *ishab cherubim*, inhabiting the cherubim'. These cherubim had 'wings'; covering the mercy-seat, where *Jehovah* took his stand, and gave his oracular responses. Under these wings, which, in a prayer to Jehovah, might with great propriety be termed 'thy wings,' was mercy, forgiveness, comfort; and the church *now*, in looking back to, and joining communion with the church then, may, upon good ground, adopt her style, and with the same faith make use of the same language. It is our *Adoni Jehovah*, who, according to Ezekiel, adorns his church; and among other particulars of his love¹, spreads his 'skirt' (Heb. כְּנָפִי, LXX. περιπτυγας, Montan. alas, his 'wings') 'over her to cover her nakedness.' He is our 'sun of righteousness, with healing in his 'wings';' and I doubt not but he himself alluded to this, in that pathetic expostulation with his church, in the days of his flesh upon earth—'How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings'; where we cannot but observe likewise, with what fervency, and indisputable plainness of expression, he claims to himself in his own person

¹ 1 Sam. iv. 4. Ps. lxxx. 2. Isaiah xxxvii. 16, &c.

² Exod. xxv. 20—22. xxxvii. 9. 1 Kings viii. 6, 7.

³ Chap. xvi. 8.

⁴ Mal. iv. 2. applied St Luke i. 78.

⁵ St Matth. xxiii. 37. St Luke xiii. 34.

person, all these repeated manifestations of love and mercy in old times; and thereby holds himself out to be the *Jehovah*, in whom the faithful always trusted, and, 'in the shadow of whose wings,' his church always did, and always will rejoice. There is another of these many places, where 'shadow' is mentioned in a comfortable sense, that has something of a strange appearance — 'Shadow of a great rock in a weary land'. The metaphor here seems a little uncouth in its aspect, but like 'the shadow of thy wings,' is also built upon a reality, and the sense of it is not to be fully understood without having that reality in our eye. We read in Numb. xx. 8—11. of a rock, *עֵל*, *elo*, (the prophet's word here), which Moses struck in the wilderness, the weary, thirsty land, 'and the waters gushed out like rivers'. What this rock was, which Moses struck, St Paul very plainly tells us — 'They drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was *Christ*'. The prophet calls his rock *עֵל*, *chabed*, we read it a *great* rock, but it is the word for *glory*; the glorious rock, the rock of glory, or, the rock the glory, attributed to Christ¹. All this the prophet predicates of *אִישׁ*, *LXX.* *ἀνδρῶν*, a MAN, which entitles us, who belong to the God-man, the man Christ Jesus², to 'the shadow' of

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¹ Isaiah xxxii. 2.² Psalm lxxviii. 16.³ 1 Cor. x. 4.⁴ Psalm xxiv. 10. lxxxv. 9. cvi. 20. St John i. 14. Heb. i. 3.⁵ 1 Tim. ii. 5.

that glorious rock, the *only* rock, that ever could or did refresh a thirsty land; and a christian cannot but see and admire the elegance and application of this, perhaps to others harsh and unseemly, comparison. This rock of the prophets, like the *tappuhh* in the song, afforded both refreshment and nourishment: 'A man,' says the prophet, 'shall be 'as rivers of water in a dry place', 'the shadow of 'a glorious rock in a thirsty land. So says the church here, by another figure of equal significance: 'Under his shadow was, is, my delight, and 'my residence, and his fruit sweet to my taste.' This is too frequent a simile to stand in need of explication. 'How sweet are thy *words* unto my taste?'¹ was the rapturous exclamation of another royal Poet; and no christian, I hope will, no man of sense, I think, needs be ashamed to join in it. The Psalmist's 'words' are but a part of our '*Songster's* 'fruit. The church's *tappuhh*, apple-tree, here referred to, literally and really possesses the wonderful qualities, which the old 'mother of all living' foolishly and fatally imagined she saw in another tree²: 'that it was good for *food*, and pleasant to 'the *eyes*, and a tree to be desired to make one 'wise.' This tree stood in the sacred inclosure of Eden, opposite to another tree of symbolical institution, the *tree of life*. May not our *tappuhh* here have a retrospect to this blessed tree? It carries in
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¹ See St John vii. 37, 38.

² Ps. cxix. 103.

³ Gen. iii. 6.

its formation the idea of that creative act, by which 'life' was first infused into the body of dust; and except once, in the prophet Joel¹, we meet with the word nowhere but in the writings of our present bard, once in Prov. xxv. 11. and four times in this song; in all which there is no necessity from the context to confine it to the apple, or indeed to any real known fruit or fruit-tree whatever. Let it be remembered too, how frequently Solomon speaks of the tree of life². 'Wisdom,' (and we know whom he means by *wisdom* in his Proverbs, none other indeed than his fair one, *dudi*, in this song), this wisdom, he says, 'is a tree of life to them that lay hold on her'. The prophet Ezekiel, another emblematical painter, had a vision of something like this, in Ezek. xlvii. 7. 'Behold on the bank of the river (עַל רֵבֶק קָאֵר, *otz rab* 'mad, sing.) a very great, princely, tree, on the 'one side, and on the other.' The translations indeed, all of them except Arias Montanus, render it plural, 'very many trees,' parallel to the 12th verse, 'all trees for meat,' where the original 'has it כָּל עֵץ, *col otz*, 'every tree.' But the apocalyptic St John, to whom our marginal references direct us, and who will be allowed to be as good an interpreter of Ezekiel as any other, not only has it singular, but expressly restricts it to my purpose—'On the one side of the river, and on the other (עַל

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¹ Chap. i. 12.² Prov. iii. 18.³ See also Prov. xi. 30. xiii. 12. xv. 4.

‘ταυθεν και απευθεν, *hinc et hinc*) the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, and yielded her fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations.’ ‘A wholesome tongue (marg. the healing of the tongue, ἰασις γλωσσης LXX. or the healing tongue) is a tree of life.’ Upon all these authorities, analogous to, and explanatory of, one another, I see no impropriety in referring Solomon’s *tappuhh* to the same object that the prophet and apocalypt had an eye to; thus discovering the particular beauty of the church’s delightful exultation here before us. How happy a situation must it be, to be under such a *shadow* for protection, and to partake of the *fruit* of this *tappuhh*, for sweetness, for healing, for wisdom, for nourishment in *grace* here, and to glory hereafter! ‘O, taste and see that Jehovah is good!’

• VER. 4.—*He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.*

• Another poetical flight of sublime devotion, expressing, as it were, a change of position, but still attended with the same happy consequences. *He brought me*—the same HE, the king who brought her into his chambers, (*hebiari*, Heb. the word the same in both places), brings her in here. No scheme

1 Rev. xxii. 2. Compare Ezekiel’s 12th verse, and see Prov. xv. 4.

2 Psalm cxix. 103.—quoted above.

3 Rev. ii. 7. xxii. 14.

4 Psalm xxxiv. 8.

scheme of entrance contrived by her, no forcible intrusion to be attempted on her part. All is his doing; the house is his, and no getting into it without admittance from him, and induction by him. 'With joy shall they be brought, and shall enter into the king's palace'. 'I will come again, and take you to myself'. Let this be attended to. *Into the banqueting house*—(בֵּית הַיַּיִן, *beth hain*, αὐτὸν τὴν οἶνον LXX.) 'the house of wine' marg. I wish our translators had not, on many occasions, acted the paraphrasts so much, but given us the exact rendering of the original as it stood, and left the idea to the reader's own imagination. 'House of wine,' to a christian at least, has something of a higher sound than 'banqueting house'; and, in the spiritual sense especially, would have presented something peculiarly striking to our minds. It is true, even in this sense, 'banqueting house,' or house of festivity, is not upon the main altogether improper. But the mention of *wine*, (*the wine*, both the Hebrew and Greek have the article), such a material ingredient in the church's banquet, would have told us whence this festivity comes, and what is the cause of it, either as to the emblem or the reality.¹ *His banner over me was love*:—His banner, דָּגְלוֹ, *daglu*. It is a military standard, used in the hosts of Israel², with some particular mark to distinguish one host from another, and by the context differs somehow

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¹ Psalm xlv. 15.

² St John xiv. 2, 3.

³ See above, ch. i. 4.

⁴ Numb. ii. and x.

or other from what we would call ensigns.—‘ Every man shall pitch by his own (*dagl*) standard, with the (*athuth*) ensigns of his father's house’. The *dagl*, therefore, seems to have been something belonging to the battalion, as we would call it, in general, like the coat-of-arms of the several princes, conspicuously displayed for their several companies to resort to. This *dagl* of the beloved's here, the church says, was אהבה, *ahebe*, love. It was ‘ love ’ indeed, עלי, *oli*, not only ‘ over her ’ for protection and defence, but likewise lifted up ‘ above her,’ to repair to it in obedience for order and direction. The christian knows how and when he is enlisted, brought in, to this host, ‘ to fight manfully under ‘ Christ's banner ’, this banner of *love*, which he displayed ‘ over, above ’ his church, when, after instituting the wine-banquet, he was lifted up on the cross, and there triumphed over the principalities and powers that were against her¹. Hence we may see what encouragement we have to this warfare, and what a powerful call to persevere ‘ manfully ’ in it, when the banner we are to repair to, and fight under, is love ; such love, ‘ greater than ‘ which cannot be shewn, when a man, a God-man, ‘ layeth down his life for friends⁴, for sinners⁵ ! ’ Well might the church, under the impression of such remembrance, break out into the vehement,
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¹ Numb. ii. 2.

² Office of Baptism.

³ Col. ii. 14, 15.

⁴ St John xv. 13.

⁵ Rom. v. 8.

but seemingly incoherent ejaculation in the next verse !

VER. 5.—*Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples ; for I am sick of love.*

Nothing is more usual in the rapturous effusions of sacred antiquity, than such abrupt transitions as the one now before us. A notable instance of which we have as far back as old Jacob's time : When giving his son Dan his death-bed blessing, he spoke thus, in his mystical manner of description, ' Dan is a serpent in the way, an adder in the 'path,' &c. and then breaks out into this unconnected sort of exclamation, ' O Lord, I have waited for thy salvation ' ; ' &c. The salvation of Jehovah was a theme that the good patriarch's dying heart was full of ; and it was the comparing his son Dan to the *nahash*, the serpent, for what reason we cannot pretend to discover, which produced this sudden effusion of faith and hope in his saving God ; like what serious people among ourselves are ready to say, when at any time in conversation, they happen to mention the devil, and immediately add, ' God preserve us ; ' so here, the church under a deep affecting sense of her happy condition, breaks out into this strong and strangely sounding expression of being *sick of love*. And let us not be offended at it, till we be sure what it means—whether her own love,

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or her beloved's. She had just before been speaking of 'his' love, how mighty, how conspicuous, how high, like a displayed banner, it appears. Is there, then, any impropriety in supposing that this is still the train of mind she feels? We know how much a sincere and strong sense of favours received pierces, and, as it were, wounds the truly grateful heart, especially in such a case as the spiritual sense here must bring into our view. And, it is impossible, I think, to reflect seriously on the love of CHRIST to his church, without feeling such strong, and what may be called sickening sinking emotions. Yea, we have instances recorded in scripture, where even joy and admiration have produced such effects as are similar to the sickness, חלח, *hhulth*, which is here spoken of: (a sickness, as the word is frequently used, arising from wounds or hurts, as in 1 Kings xxii. 34. 'I am wounded,' marg. 'made sick'.) Thus, when good old Jacob heard of his son Joseph's prosperity in Egypt, it is said 'his heart fainted'.¹ So when the queen of Sheba, on hearing of the fame of Solomon, concerning the *name of Jehovah*, had come to visit him, and had seen all his wisdom and magnificence, we are told, 'there was no more spirit in her'.² What wonder, then, is it that the church should imitate this example, in contemplation of the magnificent overpowering love of her Redeemer? And would not the queen of Sheba rise up in judgement against the church and condemn her, if she were cold and indif-

¹ Gen. xlv. 26.² 1 Kings x. 4. 5.

indifferent on such a heart-melting theme, when it is to be remembered that ‘ a greater than Solomon is here ’ ? Sure I am, that holy men, even apostles themselves, those infallible expositors of ancient types, have expressed themselves on this subject in such terms, as manifestly indicate the devout confusion of their hearts, and that they were in some measure out of themselves, lost in, and, as it were, sick with the affecting theme. Hear how St Paul prays for his Ephesians, ‘ that we, being “ rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and “ length, and depth, and height, and to know the “ love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye “ might be filled with all the fulness of God *.’ A writer such as St Paul, who could thus express himself, when labouring under a powerful assurance of the unmeasurable and incomprehensible love of Christ, might properly enough be said to have been, and that literally, like the fair one here— ‘ sick of love.’ Therefore, she says, ‘ *stay me with “ flagons, comfort me with apples.*’ The address is in the plural number, and without applying to companions or virgins, may be taken impersonally, as a general wish usual in such cases. But what mean the ‘ flagons and apples ?’ What I have already offered about the *tappuhk* may be sufficient to point out the meaning of the *apples*. But what we are to understand by the *flagons* is not so clear.

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* S. Matth. xii. 42.

2 Ephes. iii. 17—19.

The word *אִשִּׁשׁוּת*, *ashishuth*, (probably from *אֵשׁ*, *ash*, fire, so some vessel or pitcher made by fire), occurs but seldom, and is variously rendered by the LXX. Once in Hosea¹ it is joined with *עֲנָבִים*, *grapes*, which perhaps may justify our translators making it ‘a flagon of wine²,’ as they have rendered the grapes in Hosea *wine*. This wish of the church, therefore, certainly implies a prayer for something that she stood much in need of, some support that she could not procure for herself; something, in a word, relative to the happy state she had been describing, of being under the comfortable shade of her beloved *tappuhh*, and of being brought into the house of *wine*, with its *ashishuth*, flagons, ‘the cup, or ‘flagon of blessing³.’ Or, if after all it shall be thought that the speaker here did not well understand her own language, when under such agitation of mind, let another apostle plead her apology; who, when sickened, as it were, into sleep, by the glorious vision of the ‘Beloved’s’ transfiguration upon the mount⁴, broke out into a rapturous strain of devotion, ‘but did not know what he said.’ And as I have made use of St Paul’s authority for explaining what is meant by the church’s being ‘sick of love,’ I cannot do better, to illustrate her wish here, than by his conclusion of the passage referred to—‘Now unto him, who is able to do exceeding

¹ Chap. iii. 3.

² 2 Sam. vi. 19

³ 1 Cor. x. 16. ‘He took the cup’—‘This cup,’ &c.—passim.

⁴ St Luke ix. 28—33.

‘hand’ : ‘Sit thou on my right hand’ : ‘The years of the right hand of the Most High’ : And the christian who remembers his creed can be at no loss how and where to direct his ideas. It is the other part that requires a solution, or what the church means, either in declaration or wish, by Christ’s ‘left hand, under her head.’ The only word in all scripture for the left hand, *שמאל*, *shemal*, is said to be, what is not very common, a four-lettered root ; so like many others even of the tri-literals, may be resolved into its component parts : And here there appear at first sight two remarkable words *שמע*, *Shem*, name, and *אל*, *Al*, one of the known names of God, which bid fair by usage to enter into this composition. Why these two words should be applied to the left hand, I cannot positively say. But it is worth the observing, as a sort of warrant for my derivation, that the Greek word used by the LXX. here, and indeed of current use for the left hand, is *ἐνωμπεον*, which the dictionaries make up of *eu*, *bene*, good, and *ονμα*, *name* ; ‘so fausti nominis ac ominis, of lucky name and omen ;’ and tell us, as a reason for this, that in soothsaying, ‘the left was reckoned happy.’ And even the other Greek word for the left hand, *ἀριστερα*, has some look this way, being borrowed from *αριστον*, one of the superlatives of *αγαθος*, good. I know the Latin

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¹ Psalm lxxx. 17.

² Psalm cx. 1. &c.

³ Psalm lxxvii. 11. compare with this Psalm lxxx. 27. ‘My firstborn higher than the kings of the earth,’ literally Heb. ‘The Most High to the kings,’ &c.

‘sinister,’ and English ‘left,’ are commonly taken in a bad sense, as we say, ‘sinistrous dealing,’ ‘left-handed ways of doing,’ but upon what account is not very clear. Perhaps too, it may raise some prejudice against what I am offering, that Christ’s left hand is in a very solemn process described, and by himself too, as a most terrible position. ‘Then shall he say to them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed.’ But the force of this inference, if there be any force in it, will vanish, when it is remembered, how a faithful *woman* among his followers petitioned him in the days of his flesh, and in terms too, which he does not find fault with, though he rejects the matter of her petition, ‘to grant that her two sons might sit, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left, in his kingdom’; in allusion, no doubt, from a Jewish believer, to that inviting particular which she knew Solomon had specified in his beautiful description of wisdom—‘Length of days is in her right hand, and ‘in her left hand riches and honour’¹. If therefore, this interpretation of our present Hebrew word will hold, as there is, we see, a good deal of probability for such interpretation, it will open up to us one comfortable meaning of what the church says here about the left hand under her head. But there may be even more in it, than this seems to indicate. *Under my head*, תַּחַת לְרִאשִׁי, *tahat le rashi*, literally, under, to, or for, my head. תַּחַת, *tahat*, sub, under,

¹ St Matth. xxv. 41.² St Matth. xx. 21.³ Prov. iii. 16.

under, signifies also *instead of*, substitution of one thing or person in the place of another, like the Greek *'avri*, and Latin *pro*: so Eve said, 'God hath appointed me another seed instead of, *tahat*, *'avri*, *pro*, Abel'. 'Abraham took the ram, and offered him up instead of his son *.' 'Am I in God's 'stead?' said Jacob †. So the same word, when applied here, will make the sense to be 'for,' or 'instead of,' that is, to be my head. And then the meaning of the expression will turn out to be that great fundamental of the christian faith, the NAME, the Irradiator, (so the word *Al* is found to signify), is or may he be the head of the church ‡, and the *Adoni*, the person who is not only on, but is the right hand, does, or may he embrace her! I do not absolutely insist upon this explication, though I am certain that the doctrine drawn from it is perfectly scriptural, and there is nothing in the language here to contradict it.

VER. 7.—*I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love till he please.*

This solemn charge still comes from the same speaker, though some of the commentators, fortified indeed by Jerome's version, put it into the mouth of the beloved; and the reason they assign for

* Gen. iv. 25.

† Gen. xxii. 13.

‡ Gen. xxx. 2.

§ Ephes. v. 23. Col. i. 18.

for this is, because the noun for ‘love,’ and the verb for ‘please,’ are both feminine. But this is no reason at all. The word *ahabah*, love, is indeed feminine, but it has no *my* to it, as we read it, *my* love; and the LXX. and Latin have it without the pronoun, *την αγαπην*, the love. So this can afford no ground for giving it as an appellation from the Beloved to the woman. She had twice before been speaking of *love* in the abstract; why then may she not be thought to continue the same form here? And then for the feminine verb ‘please,’ (which is a peculiarity, and many times a most useful one, in the Hebrew idiom, and should be more noticed than it often is), it corresponds, by construction, with the immediately preceding feminine noun ‘love,’ and might have been rendered by neither *he* nor *she*, but by ‘*it* please.’ So there is nothing in the words to take this speech away from the church, where our translation places it, and where, both by connexion and sense, it appears most natural. Let us therefore see what the sense of it is. *I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem.* Of these daughters I have spoken already. *I charge you.*—This is called an adjuration, a making them to swear. The root is שבע, *shebo*, and carries the idea of *seven*, *full*, *oath*. Much has been said to account for this, from different parties, and with different views. As a verb, Jehovah applies it, in the niph'al passive form, to himself בי נשבעתי, *bi neshboti*, ‘by myself have I sworn, literally,’ ‘in myself I
‘am

‘am sworn’, נשבע יהוה, *neshbo*, ‘Jehovah the Lord
 ‘sware, Jehovah is sworn’¹: So in application to
 men swearing, it is always used passively. In the
 active sense of imposing an oath, or causing others
 to swear, which we call *adjuring*, or, as here, *charg-*
ing, we find it always in the hiphil form, with ‘*jod*
 in the third order’². The following pronoun, אתכם,
athkem, which we read in the accusative, ‘you,’ may
 be rendered (as the particle את, *ath*, often is) ‘with
 you,’ as the verb השבעתי, *heshboti*, is of the passive
 hophal form, so may signify that the speaker is also
 laid under oath. We have sundry instances, where
 not attending to this grammatical distinction about
 the hiphil mark weakens the force of the sentence.
 Thus³, we read, ‘Joshua adjured *them* at that
 ‘time, saying, Cursed be the man that buildeth Je-
 ‘richo,’ &c.’ *Them* is an addition, put in to make
 an adjuration of it, and both the LXX. and Jerom
 want it. The verb is passive, so ought not to be
 followed by an accusative. The curse was gene-
 ral, and included Joshua with the rest. So again⁴,
 we are told, ‘Jehoiada took an oath of the cap-
 ‘tains,’ &c. Who gave him that power? As high
 priest, ‘he brought them into the house of the
 ‘Lord, and made a covenant with them ויכרת להם
 ברית *veicarath lem berith*, says the Hebrew, ‘exci-
 ‘dit eis fœdus,’ says Montanus, διεθετο αυτοις διαθηκην
 Κυριου,

¹ Gen. xxii. 16.² Psalm cx. 4.³ See Gen. xxiv. 3. 1 Sam. xiv. 27, 28. 1 Kings xxii. 16, &c.⁴ Josh. vi. 26.⁵ 2 Kings xi. 4.

Ku'as, say the LXX. that is, he cut off *berith*, or disposed the disposition of the Lord for them, or, as we would say, gave them the sacrament. All this he could do as a priest; and then, as a loyal fellow-subject, **ישבו אתם**, *ishbo athem*, he entered into an oath, or was sworn, with them. What is to be gathered from all this, will be seen as we go along. *By the roes and by the hinds of the field.*—This is called the form of adjuring, and the rural simplicity of it is much extolled by those who admire Solomon's Song as a pastoral; though, even in that sense, it may be a question whether the women of Jerusalem in those days were so much taken up or acquainted with *roes* and *hinds* as this application supposes them: And much more is it to be doubted, if an inspired writer would have debased the sacred solemnity of adjuring by such a mean-looking form as this appears to be. I do not meet with such another instance in all Scripture; and, without some such warrant, all the Pindars and, Anacreons that can be produced have no weight with me. Neither do I see any thing in our Poet's own language that requires it. What it could be that has made our translators call the first word '*roes*,' I cannot find out. The LXX. call it *δυναμεις*, *pow-ers*, which certainly has no connexion with *roes*. The original word is **צבא**, that word which constitutes the well known, because so frequently given, title, JEHOVAH SABAOTH, Lord of Hosts; and which, by all expositors hitherto, has been interpreted to denote his universal *dominion* over all the

hosts of heaven and earth. It is with the utmost diffidence and reluctance that I allow myself to dissent from such a respectable generality; especially from two of them, the late Mess. Hutchinson and Bate, for whose memory I have the sincerest veneration; and to whose useful, though by many undervalued, labours, I acknowledge myself deeply indebted. Yet upon the present subject, I cannot help saying that I find nothing in scripture to justify this so general interpretation. The 'host of heaven' I frequently find. But it is always singular צְבֹאֵה שָׁמַיִם, *tzeba hashemim*, the host; which, on the principles of philosophy maintained by these learned writers, may be applicable enough there, though I much question, whether on the same principles the word *tzeba* can be properly and consistently applied to the earth. Indeed, we have the plural word 'hosts' once, I think by the context, applied to the powers of heaven: 'Bless ye the Lord, all ye 'his hosts' — צְבֹאֵי, *tzebaiu*, masculine; but the word under consideration is feminine, *tzebauth*. The root is צָבָא, *tzeba*, to minister, meet in troops, or attend; as a noun 'στρατία' in Greek, 'exercitus' in Lat. which we call 'army;' but literally, exercise, or service, either in a civil or religious sense. Hence the writers I have in my eye apply it to deer and goats, because they meet in troops, which I think other creatures do as much as they, wolves, coney, sheep, &c. And, lest this should not be sufficient, it is said that this root has affinity, as the Hebrew gram-

grammarians call it, with the verb צבה, *tzebe*, to swell, swell up, or be blown up, and so denotes the goat or deer, which they say is a turgid swelling creature. This application is founded on the interchanging of the two final letters, * *aleph* or *a*, and ה *he* or *e*, in the several roots where they are found; which is yet far from being certain. For in turning over the Lexicons, we shall scarce meet with an instance where this absolutely holds; but, on the other hand, shall find numbers where these two final letters make a material difference; as קנה, *quena*, to be jealous, and קנה, *quene*, to purchase; מצא, *metza*, to find, and מצה, *metze*, to squeeze; שנה, *shena*, to hate, and שנה, *shenc*, to change, with sundry more, where critics have observed that the translations have lost the sense sometimes by confounding the finals. For usage makes a rule of it, that tho' the final ה *he*, when mutable, which is not always, may be, and is turned into י *jod*, or ו *vau*, or ט *tau*, in the various deflections, or lost altogether; yet it is never changed into * *aleph*, which, when final, is as immutable a radical as any of the eleven that are never serviles; and which, though in the pointed grammars, it be called quiescent, and a foolish pother made about a *paradigma* of it accordingly through all the forms, yet still appears, and keeps its place without any transmutation or omission whatever. Upon this rule, so invariably established, and which I have been at all possible pains to look into, I cannot allow צבה, *tzeba*; or צבה, *tzebe*, to be so similar as to interchange senses, or lend de-

rivations to one another. So that tho' נָזִיב *nabi*, or נָזִיב, *tzebie*, which I find to be a creature of the deer genus, may by rule come from נָזַב, *tzebe*, to swell or be prominent, it will not follow, either by rule or necessity of construction, that our word *tzebauth*, coming so naturally from *tzebe*, an entirely different root, should signify any such creature. And if there must be such a community of signification between *tzebe* and *tzebe*, as that *tzebe* may lend a derivative to the signification of *tzebe*, I would wish to know why *tzebe* is not so friendly on the other hand, as sometimes to give some of its known and regular derivatives to the use of our word *tzebauth*, in one or other of the many positions in which it occurs, which we do not find that it has ever done; and the want of which on that side, I take to be a strong exception to the interchanging scheme, upon which this ungrammatical rendering of *tzebauth* is founded.

Let us now see how usage stands with this word : And here I have in general observed, that for the most part, except in Jerem. iii. 19. which shall be considered afterwards, it is applied either to the people of Israel, or to Jehovah. The first time we find it, Jehovah takes it to himself, ' I will bring ' forth צְבָאוֹת, *tzebauthi*, my armies, my people,' &c. In another place, he applies it to the people,

צְבָאוֹתָם,

צבאותיך, *tzebauthikem*, ‘your armies’.¹ And², the historian more particularly calls them כל צבאות יהוה, *kol tzebauth Jehova*, all the hosts of the Lord, παντα ἡ δυνάμις Κυρίου, the whole power of the Lord, LXX. One should think that this mode of expression so early met with, and at such an important juncture, could not miss to lead to the meaning of the title *Lord of hosts*, since, if the people of Israel were the hosts of the Lord, it must follow that he is Lord of hosts, from his peculiar connexion with them. The *tzebauth Jehovah* here, cannot mean the hosts of heaven and earth: Why then should ‘*Jehovah tzebauth*’ mean the Lord of these hosts? I need not quote the many places where this title occurs. The Psalms, Prophets, and historical parts of scripture are full of it; all tending to shew that it signified something, in which these writers thought themselves intimately concerned. The 2d and 10th chapters of the book of Numbers are abundantly sufficient to shew us, who and what these *tzebauth*, hosts, were. The marshalling of the people of Israel, the then *church*, into four battalions, consisting each of three tribes under their respective princes, and forming a hollow square to enclose the Tabernacle and Sanctum Sanctorum, where was the presence (the scripture calls it the residence or dwelling) of their God, as commanded and directed by Jehovah himself, appears to me an irrefragable demonstration in what it is, that this so eminent

¹ Exod. xii. 17.² Exod. xii. 41.

nent Old-Testament title originated. Had it meant, as is commonly said, Jehovah's universal dominion over all his works, it is more than presumable that some of the faithful, prior to this æra, in their addresses to him, or acknowledgements of him, would have made use of it, especially when their subject led to it; as for instance, in the history of Abraham¹, where we find a priest of the most high God, the *al oliun*, (who, in that character, certainly well knew how to have expressed Jehovah's universal sovereignty) calling him 'Possessor of Heaven and 'Earth.' From this appellation out of that mouth, and from the silence of these early times about 'Lord of hosts,' (negative as the argument is), I have no difficulty to conclude, that 'Lord of Hosts' was not a title of Deity then; and that, when it became so, it was not in that view which has been so long and so generally supposed. The first time we meet with it, is after the tabernacle with the Divine Presence had been set up in Shiloh², where we are told that Elkanah went up to worship, and to sacrifice to the Lord of hosts in Shiloh: And³ a little after it is said, 'Hannah vowed a vow, and said, O 'Lord of Hosts,' &c. In both which places, it is observable that the LXX. retain the original word for *hosts* in Greek characters; and in Hannah's prayer, by a strange periphrasis and multiplicity of names,

¹ Gen. xiv. 19.² 1 Sam. i. 3.³ 1 Sam. i. 11.

names, they render it, Ἀδωνι, Κυrie Ελωε σαβαωθ, Adonai, Kyrie Eloë sabaoth. Again we find it more descriptively¹ applied, where it is said ‘that the ‘people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from ‘thence the *Arun berith*, the ark of the covenant of ‘the Lord of hosts, who inhabiteth the cherubim,’ where the LXX. render it Κυρι[⊙] δυναμεων, Lord of powers. It is likewise to be taken notice of, how the LXX’s translation varies the rendering of this word. In Isaiah it always keeps the original word Sabaoth; as two of our New-Testament writers, quoting Isaiah by that translation, do². Through the other prophets where the word occurs, they make it παντοκρατωρ, Almighty. In the Psalms, and some other detached places, it is δυναμεων, of powers. How to account for this diversity, whether by supposing that this translation has been the work of different hands, and at different times, or that the translators, whoever they were, either had not perfectly understood, or had not been willing fully to discover the peculiar import of this title, is neither material in itself, nor to my purpose. The most common rendering we find is Κυρι[⊙] δυναμεων, adopted universally by the Vulgate, Dominus exercituum, Lord of armies: And that we may not think ourselves obliged to apply the Greek word δυναμεων, which properly signifies ‘powers,’ to the powers or hosts of heaven and earth, let it be remembered, that in the 2d chapter of Numbers, they call

¹ 1 Sam. iv. 4.² Rom. ix. 39. and St James v. 4.

call every particular host by this word *δυναμις*; the host, *δυναμις* of Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, &c. and in ver. 32. 'throughout their hosts,' *ἐν ταῖς δυναμῶσι*, plural, which certainly belongs to the people of Israel, and so bids fair to point out to us what the men, if they were all the same men, meant by *δυναμεων*, hosts, when they joined it to *Κυριου* Lord. Let it be likewise observed, to add what force it can to this confined application, that tho', while the worship of Jehovah in the tabernacle and temple continued, the sacred writers currently make use of this title, and for the most part in their speeches and addresses to the people of God, yet in the two, who wrote under the captivity, when there was no instituted place of worship, Ezekiel and Daniel, we meet with no such appellation. Whereas no sooner is the building of the second temple set about, after the restoration, but we find the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, affectedly, as it were, falling into the old style again. 'Say thou unto them, 'Thus saith the Lord of hosts, turn ye unto me, 'saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto 'you, saith the Lord of hosts'—three times we see in one short verse, and designedly, we may believe, by such emphatic repetition, to awaken the people's attention, and to comfort their minds with the remembrance of that once well understood, but long disused designation. I pay no regard to any objection against this observation that may be drawn

* See Hag. i. 5, 7. and ii. 6, 7, 8, 9. and Zech. i. 3.

drawn from the Talmudic fancy (which they build on the imaginary want of the letter *he*, the fifth of the Hebrew alphabet, in one of the words of Hag. i. 8.) of the five deficient in the second temple, among which the cherubic presence, which I lay so much stress upon, was one; when, besides the authority of these prophets using the old language, and where it is noticeable, that in the verse quoted from Zechariah, the LXX. have it twice *Κοιτοὶ δυνάμεις*, I have the confession of these Talmudists themselves, that the cherubic presence was the very marrow of their worship, and without which, it could not be denominated worship. Certainly Jehovah was the Lord of heaven and earth all the time, both when there was a temple, and when there was none. But it seems he was not *Jehovah sabaoth*, Lord of hosts, till, and only when, there was a place of his own chusing for him to dwell and reside in, and for the 'Sabaoth' the *δυναμεις*, the hosts of Israel, his people, his church, *לְעֵזְבָה*, *letzeba*, to repair to, and assemble in, according to the old instituted and invariable prescription, 'Three times in the year shall all thy males' (Heb. *זָכָר*, *zakurka*, thy memorialists, according to the numeration of the people in the Book of Numbers) 'appear before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose,' &c. Indeed, without this particular view, there are a great many passages, in the Psalms especially, the meaning of which cannot be

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I i

clearly

clearly perceived. I shall instance only in one¹, 'O Shepherd of Israel, thou who inhabitest the cherubim—before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up thy strength,' (גִּבְרוּתָךְ, *gabrotheca*, thy manhood), 'and come and save us.' It will be difficult, I suspect, for the ablest expositors to account for this speciality of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, or to discover the true reason of these three being so particularized in this prayer to the Shepherd of Israel, unless by the method which I have been endeavouring to point out, as the only clear way of solving this difficulty. According to that marshalling order, to which I have referred, the camp, as it is called, of Judah, with his two conjuncts, Issachar and Zebulun, pitched on the east side before the tabernacle and sanctuary; on the right hand, or south, were Reuben, Simeon and Gad; on the left, or north, were Dan, Asher, and Naphtali; and to the westward, immediately behind the Sanctum Sanctorum, where the cherubim with their Divine Residenter were, was the camp of Ephraim, with his two associates, Benjamin and Manasseh. So Jehovah, inhabiting the cherubim, was, by his position, literally and locally before (לְפָנַי, *lepani*, Heb. ἐναντίον, LXX. *coram*, Lat. over against) these three. There is no necessity for metaphor or allegory here. All was well understood by the church of those days. This was one of their SHEPHERD's characters, and in this light he
is

¹ Psalm lxxx. 1, 2.

is immediately addressed¹; under the significant and parallel title, Lord God of hosts, the hosts among whom his residence was. By this account we see, that the inhabitant of the cherubim was Jehovah: And what Jehovah, or, to speak more properly, and in christian style, What person in Jehovah it was, who, by his cherubical position in the camp of Israel, the then church, was the *Jehovah Sabaoth*, the Lord of, or in, their hosts, we shall readily come to the knowledge of, by examining and comparing Scripture with itself.

We have a joyful declaration of the old church to this purpose², ‘The Lord of hosts is with us;’ *יְהוָה עִמָּנוּ*, *Immanu*, *μεθ’ ἡμῶν*, LXX. *nobiscum* Lat. not ‘on our side,’ but with us, among us, in our company, one of us. The prophet Isaiah, describing the child that was to be born of the virgin, tells us³ he was to be called *יְמָנְוּ*, *Immanu-al*; *al*, ‘God’ *immanu*, as in the Psalm, ‘with us.’ And how this was to be brought about, we may learn from the same prophet, speaking⁴ of a promised child, who was to be called, among other names, *אֵל גִּבּוֹר*, *al gibbur*, the passive of *gabar*, which signifies vir, man, and in that sense, strong, mighty, manly. By being *gibbur*, (viratus, made man), this *Al*, God, was to be *Immanu*, *with us*⁵; and to apply all to my

1 i 2

present

¹ Psalm lxxx. 4. 7. 14. 19.

² Psalm xli. 7. 11.

³ Isa. vii. 14.—explained by the fulfilment, St. Matth. i. 23.

⁴ Chap. ix. 6.

⁵ St John i. 14.

present view, the prophet sums up his pompous account of this *wonderful* child with this explanatory conclusion, 'The zeal of the *Lord of hosts* will perform this.' Long after Isaiah's days, the prophet Zechariah has a prediction (which we are taught by the highest authority how to apply *) much in the same language with Isaiah †, 'Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the MAN (*gabar*, as above) that is *my fellow*, saith the *Lord of hosts*. 'My fellow,' *immathi*, formed from *my*, with, as above noticed; 'my joined one,' coherenter mihi, as Jerom and the Vulgate have it, 'adhering, sticking to me.' And who could the *Lord of hosts*, who says this of himself, be, but the *Lord of hosts immanu*, with us, the *Al*, God, with us, the *Al*, who took the *gabar*, man, to be his fellow, and so became the *Al-gibbur*, the God-man, *God manifested in the flesh* ‡? This key of Zechariah's, as put into our hands by our blessed Lord himself, will open up to us sundry dark passages in the Psalms, which cannot be well seen through without it. It will discover to us what the import is of that petition from the church to the *Lord of hosts*, 'Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the Son of man whom thou madest strong for thine own self'; a prayer to the Deity concerning the humanity in the same person, with what

* Psalm lxi. 9. referred to in St John ii. 17.

† St Matth. xxvi. 31. St Mark xiv. 27.

‡ Zech. xiii. 7.

§ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

¶ Ps. lxxx. 17.

what view is not before me at present. So likewise in that other prayer, ‘O Lord God of hosts—look upon the face of thine anointed, ~~messias~~, thy Messiah,’ ~~an. & Xpius ex.~~ LXX. thy Christ’, as St Peter tells us, how God ‘anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power.’ To this Lord of hosts is directed that fervent exclamation in the end of this psalm, ‘O Lord of hosts, blessed is Adam, (not *the*, or *a* man, but man in general, mankind), trusting, when he trusts in thee.’ The object of this blessed trust is, in the same terms, said to be that one, who, by a begetting of some sort or other, was to be clothed with the character of Son; or, in Zechariah’s language, ‘to take the man to be his fellow.’ I shall just mention another psalm*, distinguishingly calling the Lord of hosts ‘the King of glory.’ Isaiah says ‘he once saw the glory of this King, Lord of hosts; and the evangelist; St John ‘applies this vision to Christ’.

From these passages, and more could have been adduced, it sufficiently appears, both that the Christ of the New Testament was the *Jehovah Sabaoth*, the Lord of hosts of the Qld ; and for what particular reasons

* Psalm lxxiv. 8. 9.

• Acts 5. 38.

3 Psalm ii. 7. 12.

4 Psalm xxiv. 10.

5 Isa. vi. 3—5.

⁶ St John xii. 41.

7 'Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ,' occurs in the Te Deum, which, by the bye, were the three clauses before this one left out, as they break the connexion, and seem to be of later insertion, might be shewn to be a direct hymn, in all the parts of it, to Christ.

reasons this so solemn and peculiar title belonged to him: And I cannot help thinking that the received notion of this title's belonging to Deity in general, as expressive of dominion and sovereignty, and not particularly, I had almost said exclusively, to the Shepherd King of Israel, from some special kind of connexion with, and residence among, that people, does much eclipse and keep out of sight the shining beauty of many of that primitive church's prayers, and ardent longings for the incarnation of her Messiah. As little can I discover what it is, that could at first have connected, with this word—'hosts,' the idea of military array. Our translation indeed has in some measure homologated this notion, by rendering the word *tzeba*, war; in the first chapter of the Book of Numbers—'all that were able to go forth to *'war'*'; whereas it does not appear that the design of that numeration and subsequent disposition was for a warlike purpose, as it is scarce to be supposed, that they either did or could march in that order to fight against their enemies. The design was with a typical view ², to draw them up in a regular order (*καταγμενοι*, ordinati) around, and keep them in a decent attendance upon, the presence of *Him* who dwelt among them. Hence so many literal descriptions of him under this idea, which no stretch

¹ Following Jerom and the Vulgate, who have it so, where the LXX. have it *οι τε δυναται*.

² 1 Cor. x. 6—11.

stretch of metaphor will justify: As ¹, 'Vow and
 'pay unto the Lord your God, all ye that are
 'round about him, סביביו, *sabibiu*, his circulators,
 'encompassers,' &c. οἱ κυκλω αὐτῆς, LXX. And ²,
 'God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his
 'saints, and to be had in reverence of all (*sabibiu*,
 'τῆς περικυκλω αὐτῆς, LXX.) them that are round a-
 'bout him, and consequently, He in the midst of
 'them ³.' This was the business of their encamp-
 ment, and directs to the true meaning of the word
sabaoth, hosts, and what the purpose was, for which
 they thus צבאו assembled and met together, even
 for ministration, worship and praise to, and depen-
 dence on אלהיהם, their God ⁴. In a word, we have e-
 dence enough in scripture to ascertain the particu-
 lar import of the word at present under considera-
 tion,

¹ Psalm lxxvi. 12.² Psalm lxxxix. 7.³ St Matth. xviii. 20.

⁴ It would seem, if etymology could be trusted to, that the heathens had this sense of Hebrew צבא, *saba* or *saba*, in their eye, from the Greek verb σιβω or σιβομαι, veneror, colo, to reverence, worship, &c.; whence σιβασμα, a Deity, object of worship, σιβατο, a title given to the Emperors, ιυσιβης, religious, an observer of worship, ἀσιβης, irreligious, a neglecter, &c. Yea, as far down as the famed æra of Philosophy, we find a deity under the appellation of *Zeus Sabazios*, which by the very sound bears affinity with *Jehovah Sabaoth*. For the Athenian comic poet Aristophanes, who was contemporary with Socrates, takes notice of him as a strange and foreign god, who had lately crept in among them, and therefore ought to be banished out of Greece.—
 Quere, Whether this Zeus Sabazios might not have been that strange deity, who about this time, by the advice of Epimenides of Crete, was brought into the Grecian kalendar, and to whom, four hundred years after this, St Paul found an altar inscribed, 'to the unknown god,'—Acts xvii. 23.?

tion, *sabbath*, that, both by derivation and usage, it pertains to, and is predicated of the old church of Israel, with their God in the midst of them. And I hope I shall be pardoned for this seeming digression in illustration of a title, 'The Lord of Hosts,' which was so comfortable, and at the same time so peculiar to the people of God under the then economy, while they were obliged to assemble at one stated place for the more solemn acts and exercises of their religion and worship: But which, if what I have offered be valid, cannot with the same literal propriety, on many accounts, be made use of by the church now, under the christian extension, unless it could be made appear, what some people would fain wish to be believed, that the privileges and specialities of the tabernacle and temple of Jerusalem are transferred to, and centered in, St Peter's at Rome.

To return, therefore, to my subject. I have been endeavouring to shew, that the word in the Song here, which we read 'roes,' cannot be made to bear this sense, either from the nature of the word itself, or from the general application of it in every other place where it occurs. Nor will our common acceptation of it, as taking in the hosts of heaven and earth, be applicable to the present passage. The charge here is made to the daughters, so to women. Accordingly we read 'of women assembling (*הַצֵּבֶת*, *hatzebeth*, without the 'vau) at the door of the

¹ Exod. xxxviii. 8.

the tabernacle of the congregation. Or, if for want of the feminine *vau*, (which our translation has supplied, and marked by italics), this text shall be thought not precise enough, we have another that is direct to the point¹; where it is said of Eli's wicked sons, 'that they debauched the women' (*הַצְבִּיחוּ*, *hatzebachuth*, our very word), that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.' How came these women to be thus assembled? It will not be said, they were there by chance. The verb *צָבַח* signifies meeting by appointment; and the particular circumstance of 'the door of the tabernacle,' mentioned, as it were, by design in both places, would seem to indicate that they were 'stationed' there by appointment; consequently were sacred women, like the deaconesses among the early christians, attendants upon, and assistants, some way or other, to the orderly performance of the religious offices: And it would appear, from the terms of Eli's remonstrance to his sons², that he thought their crime was aggravated, by the consideration of the womens' being in a sacred station. Accordingly Jerom renders it 'quæ observabant,' who observed, consequently had some particular business to be observant about³. It may therefore be justly supposed, that

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¹ 1 Sam. ii. 22.² 1 Sam. ii. 25.

³ The LXX. (the Vatican copy at least) has it not; and Arias Montanus makes it 'militantibus,' who militated, which here must surely be taken in a religious sense, like 'the church militant.' And,

if

the writer of our song had some such thing as this in his eye in the address here, to the 'daughters,' &c.

But before I proceed farther, I must take under consideration the second branch of the charge, '*The hinds of the field.*' The word for hinds, אֵילִּיּוֹת, *ailuth*, is of extensive signification. The root denotes strength, power, virtue; and so the LXX. render it here *ἐν ταῖς ἰσχυρεσί*, strengths. Hence under this leading idea it is used for *idols*, the vain strengths of their worshippers; for *rams*, the leaders of the flock; for the *stag* species, strong to run; for *posts*, the strengths, supporters of houses; for some kind of trees, as in Isaiah i. 29. which we read oaks, but the LXX. *εἰδωλα*, idols. And under this application to trees, there are many who interpret Jacob's benediction to Naphtali', of a spreading tree that shooteth out goodly branches. Indeed, the addition of the 'field' here seems as likely to refer to trees as to hinds, if we consider the frequency of

if that Greek etymology, mentioned in the preceding note, of *σεβόμεναι*, be just, I think I see such women, even in their synagogue-solemnities, as far down as the christian æra. For in Acts xiii. 50. we read, that when Paul and Barnabas had with great boldness, and no small success, preached in a synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, the unbelieving Jews stirred up the 'devout women,' *ταῖς σεβόμεναις γυναῖκα*, the women that were the *σεβόμεναι*, *sebomenai*, like the נָשִׁים דּוֹצְבָאוֹת, the *nashim sabaoth*, the 'women that assembled,' &c. in old times; and so from their character and station, the fitter instruments to influence the multitude against what they called 'the new doctrines.'

¹ Gen. xlix. 21.

of this expression in scripture, 'trees of the field.' But still, it remains to be shewn to what purpose, and with what propriety, the speaker here may be said to charge the daughters by these things, as I would be explaining them. Now the stress of this difficulty lies in the common hypothesis of a charge or adjuration by something. The Hebrew is the preposition ב, *be*, which primarily signifies *in*, or *among*, and the LXX. render it here, as they do wherever it occurs in this application, by *εν*, *in*. And another particular to be remarked is, that the two supposed branches of the charge do not stand in conjunction, as in our translation and the LXX. by the conjunctive particle και, *and*, but in disjunction from, and as it were opposition to one another, by the disjunctive particle α, *au*, which always signifies *or*, but never *and*. Therefore, the charge, as it is called, will according to grammar run thus, 'I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, whether you be כעבאית in your sacred assemblies, or ministrations (at the door) or באילות השדה in, among the trees (hinds) of the field, your rural, secular occupations, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love till he please.'

This is the substance of the charge; and a few observations will suffice to ascertain the true meaning of it. Literally here, and in ch. iii. 5. it is, 'If אם, *am*, Heb. *עאן*, LXX. *si*, Lat. *ye shall stir up*, &c. which is the most usual form in scripture, by which is expressed the object of swearing, or what

we would call the matter of the oath. Take an instance or two : ' Once have I sworn by my holiness (Heb. **וְשָׁמַרְתִּי**, *en tw 'ag'w mu*, LXX. in my holy 'one) that I will not lie unto David' (Heb. and LXX. as on the marg. 'if I lie.') Again, Isaiah lxii. 8. 'Jehovah hath sworn by his right hand, 'and by the arm of his strength, (compare Psalm lxxx. 17. above) 'surely I will no more give,' (Heb. and LXX. as on the margin, if I give, &c.)' The particle *if*, we know, includes a *condition*, which, in such a case as this, where swearing is interposed, may properly be called a penalty, under which Jehovah is pleased to lay himself, as it were, when introduced as swearing. This conditional penalty, the scripture calls **אֵלֶּם**, *ale*, curse, from which, as a verb, are formed the participle plural active, **אֵלֶּם**, *Aleim*, 'the layers under a conditional penalty,' and the participle passive singular, **אֵלֶם**, *aluc*, with the 'vau in the third order, both which words our translation indiscriminately renders 'God.' And I doubt not, but it has been the apparent harshness of this idea, joined to the impossibility of God's becoming liable to any penalty², that has induced our translators to soften it, as it were, by their negative way of rendering it, and has raised such a dust of learned opposition to these two capital words of our Bible religion; tho' an inspired apostle, who by his education was no mean judge of the Bible

¹ Psalm lxxxix. 35.

² See Titus i. 2. and Heb. vi. 18.

Bible language, seems to have had no such unscriptural scruple, when he tells us¹, that ‘Christ (who, ‘as Jehovah, was one of the *Aleim*, actual im-
‘posers) was made (became, γενομενος) a curse for
‘us;’ and thereby became the *ahue*, the one on
whom the *alc* was laid. But to proceed: The
verbs, *stir up*, and *awake*, are both of the same
root, ער, *or*, or ערה, *oreh*, so are both used in the
same sense, to excite, rouse up, as in the address
quoted above², ‘Stir up thy strength,’ &c. and
with the same view in that exclamation of the pro-
phet’s³, ‘Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm
‘of the Lord,’ &c. A noun from this root signi-
fies *stir*, which, upon the plan I am recommend-
ing, and as relative to flesh, may be remembered,
in case it can discover any thing material, as we go
along. ‘Till he (the love spoken of in the abstract
before, so may be general, *our love*) please,’ תפוצץ, *te-
hapatz*. This is an important word, and to my
purpose peculiarly significant, as it expresses a
great deal more than what is implied in our com-
mon acceptation of the word *please*. It is this
word, by which the Messiah declares his willing-
ness, readiness, fondness, for his great work—‘I
‘delight to do thy will, O my God⁴.’ It is this
word, by which he expresses his love for the church,
in that beautifully descriptive promise, Isaiah lxii.
4. ‘Thou shalt no more be called forsaken, but
‘thou

¹ Gal. iii. 13.² Psalm lxxx. 2.³ Isa. li. 9.⁴ Psalm xl. 8—תפוצץ, *hapatzti*.

‘thou shalt be called *hephzibah*, (הֶפְזִיבָהּ, my delight in her), for the Lord (ה' *la hap-* negatively, ‘Sacrifice and offering (לֹא זֶבַח *la hap-* ‘*azth*) thou didst not desire’ : ‘Hath the Lord as ‘great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices’; &c. : From all which we may gather the principal meaning of this word, and to what particular purpose the scripture applies it.

And now, upon the whole, by collecting and joining together these illustrations of, and criticisms upon, the several words of this verse, which I have offered, we shall see what the true, spiritual; indeed the only sense of it is. The church, the speaker here, (as it consistently can belong to none but her), seems in these strong terms to declare her faith in, and her fervent longings towards that great object of her beloved’s pleasure and delight, the manifestation of God in the flesh; that never-forgotten view, concerning which we find so many promises and prophecies from Jehovah, concerning and for which, so many wishes and prayers from the faithful, the church. This she warns the daughters, and includes herself in the warning, to wait for patiently and quietly, in faith and hope, with prayer and perseverance, not to shew any anticipating hurry, or tumultuous self-arrogating solicitation; but decently to expect his ‘fulness of time’; and to tarry till the (עַד, the instituted) appointed time of his plea-

¹ Ps. lxxl. 6.

² 1 Sam. xv. 22.

³ Gal. iv. 4.

pleasure¹. These daughters she divides into two classes; the first, such as already under that title were, *בַּעֲבָדָת*, in ministration or attendance at the door of the tabernacle², so within the pale, the 'Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption and the 'glory.'³ The second class, including those who were in time to be cloathed with that title, but at present were, *בְּאֵלֹת הַשָּׂדֶה*, among the extraneous things of the Gentile field, those whom the apostle describes as 'aliens from the commonwealth of Israel⁴,' wandering among *ailuth*, vanities, idols, nothings, unprofitables, &c. These the church, the common *mother*, teaches, exhorts, charges to look for, and depend upon the rising, awakening of his love, brings it into their view for their instruction, (as by the sound of revelation and early tradition going through all lands, Psalm xix. 4. applied Rom. x. 18.), to prepare and ripen them against the happy time, when the beloved, the desire of all nations, should come, that fulness of time, when these strangers should be made 'fellow-citizens with the saints⁵,' when the Gentiles should receive 'the adoption of sons⁶,' and thereby that prophecy of Jeremiah⁷, which I referred to above, should be fulfilled, where he speaks of the hosts of the nations, *צְבָאוֹת גִּיּוֹם*, *sabaoth guim*, when the *guim*, the nations

¹ Habak. ii. 3, 4.

³ Rom. ix. 4, 5.

⁵ Eph. ii. 19.

² Psalm lxxxiv. 10.

⁴ Ephes. ii. 12.

⁶ Gal. iv. 5.

⁷ Chap. iii. 19.

nations shall become *sabaoth*, ministrators to, attendants upon, worshippers of, the God of Israel'. The words of the Song, then, may be received as a call upon all the faithful members of the church of Christ, to be still waiting for, and relying upon the influences of his *love*, and communications of his *grace*; whether they be such as, like the rose in Sharon, are fresh and blooming, rich in faith and good works, and blest with a more immediate enjoyment of his favour and presence, as at the door of this tabernacle; or such as, like the lily among thorns, are entangled with lusts, passions, and temptations, removed as it were out of his sight, at a kind of distance from him, bewildered among, and grappling with, the *ailuth*, strong, but fleeting, vain creatures of the *shadah*, the *field*, the as yet not fully subdued field, of wild and corrupt nature. In either of these situations, they are here charged to remember the *Beloved*, to trust to the refreshments of his love, in his own time and way, to wait his pleasure with full assurance of hope, and to go on in his strength, 'making mention of his righteousness, 'even of his only'.

I have been the longer on this verse, though not too long, I hope, both because of the importance

¹ The LXX. here seem to have had something like this in view, by their rendering what we read 'a goodly heritage of the host of nations,' by *ἐληρονομίαν Θεοῦ παντακράτορος ἰσθῆναι*, 'the inheritance of the Lord Almighty of nations.'

² Psalm lxxi. 16.

tance of the subject, as delivered in terms not hitherto, I humbly think, sufficiently explained, and because the words, by the repetition of 'them', appear to be not so much in strictness of connexion, as by way of what we would call a chorus in this truly joyful Song, an abrupt exclamation from the rapturous emotions and sensibilities of a touched and warm heart. Many such instances we have in the other songs of inspiration²; and some very parallel to the present case³. These repetitions surely are not for ornament only, or to set off the discourse; but like the well-known *Selah*⁴, so frequently made use of, to excite contemplation, and fix the attention on the matter in hand—'My heart is fixed, O God, (says the Psalmist⁵) my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise.' So says the church here, 'I charge you, O ye daughters,' &c.

VER. 8.—*The voice of my beloved; behold he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.*

The voice of my beloved—present he was not, yet she heard his voice. There is no need of trope or figure to adjust this to the laws of poetry. The Beloved has a voice of his own, and makes it heard how,

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¹ Chap. iii. 5. viii. 4.

² See Psalm xlv. 3. li. 4. io. ii. lxxx. 7. 19.

³ Psalm cvii. 8. 15. 21. 31. ⁴ מלך, διαψαλλων, LXX.

⁵ Psalm lvii. 7.

and when, and where he pleaseth. It was early heard by the poor trembling offenders, the then church, the *sheburah*, in the blackened, grey, dusky, morning state, after the black, grievous night of 'fellowship with the prince and works of darkness.' They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden, in the cool (Heb. *רוח*, *rukh*, the spirit) of day¹. It is well known, that the Targums, Talmudists, and all the Rabbins interpret this of the *מנחה*, *minra*, the Logos, the church's beloved. This *רוח*, *spirit* (marg. wind) is his usual attendant in his walkings—'Who walketh upon the wings of the "wind"?' This wind², *το πνευμα*, the spirit, bloweth 'where it listeth,' *οπου θελη*, where he willeth (1 Cor. xii. 11.) and thou hearest the sound, *φωνη*, voice; 'thereof;' and none but the Nicodemuses, the unconverted, are in doubt 'how that can be.' It was this voice that made so strong an impression on the great Elijah³. He had stood the wind, when the voice came not: He had stood the earth-quake and the fire: But when the 'still small voice' came, 'it was so, that he wrapt his face in his mantle, and went out.' 'This voice St Paul⁴, calls *χρηματισμ*⁵, the 'answer,' the oracular answer, of God. The church prays for this voice, and extols the mighty operations of it⁶. And it is carried to her

¹ Gen. iii. 8.

² Psalm civ. 3. See Ezekiel's description of his 'visions of God,' in his 1st, 3d, and 10th chapters.

³ St John iii. 8.

⁴ 1 Kings xix. 11, 12, 13.

⁵ Rom. xi. 4.

⁶ Psalm xxix. Psalm lxxviii. 33, &c.

her (as in matter by the material agent, the air, so in spirituals) by the conveyance of the concomitant spirit. Hence the sacred and significant phrase, *word and spirit*: The Beloved *emits* the voice, the spirit *transmits* it. There is no hearing any voice without air, no hearing of the Beloved's voice but by the assistance of the Spirit: So by means of this communication the church hears the voice of her Beloved, even while 'leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.' A strange metaphor this, with all the 'wildness of pastoral poetry' for its excuse, but in 'divine' compositions, neither unusual nor unmeaning. 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace'. 'Oh! that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence'. Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down, touch the mountains, and they shall smoke'. 'Why, ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams, ye hills like young sheep: Tremble, earth, at the presence of the Lord¹, at the presence of (אלה, *alue*) the God of Jacob.' These and such like quotations both justify and help to illustrate the expression before us. The *coming*, or advent, of a divine person was always the church's faith and prayer. And the old church, in her emblematical

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¹ Isaiah lii. 7. Nahum i. 15. applied Rom. x. 15.

² Isaiah lxiv. 1.

³ Psalm cxliv. 5.

⁴ Heb. אלה, Adon., Psalm cx. 1. and cxiv. 6, 7.

language, to this *coming* used to join mountains, hills, &c. So we find it historically and actually transacted', 'The Lord came down upon mount 'Sinai, on the top of the mount,' &c. *Typically* spoken of, either as past or future', 'the mountain which God desireth to dwell in,' &c. and *prophetically* foretold', 'God (אלה, *Alue*, the God of 'Jacob) came, or rather, will come, from Teman, ' (the south, the right hand), and the holy one ' (קדוש, *quedush*, passive, the sanctified, separated, 'one) from the mountain Paran (of splendour). 'Selah.' Such a coming of Jehovah the Psalmist had in his eye, with its joyful consequences, when he broke out thus, 'Let the field (singular, the Gentile field) be joyful, and all that is therein; then 'shall all the trees of the wood (in confirmation of 'what I have said on ver. 3. of this chapter) rejoice 'before the Lord, for He (בא, *ba*, the church's word 'in her song here) cometh; for he cometh,' &c. And again, still more pointedly to the case in hand', 'Let the mountains be joyful together, before the Lord, for he cometh,' &c. In the business of this *coming*, the mountains, we see, are typically employed. So says the Psalmist, (in one of those Psalms inscribed for Solomon, 'The mountains 'also shall bring peace, and the hills righteousness 'unto the people'. Therefore 'righteousness and 'peace

¹ Exod. xix. 18, 19, 20.

² Psalm lxxviii. 15, 16.

³ Habak. iii. 3.

⁴ Psalm xcvi. 12.

⁵ Psalm xcvi. 8.

⁶ Psalm lxxii. 3.

‘peace have kissed each other’¹. And St Paul calls Melchisedec², King of Righteousness, by his name, and by his designation, King of Peace. In this peaceful coming, we have seen the prophets describing the mountains as joyfully concerned. ‘Upon the mountains, the feet of him that bring-
 ‘eth good tidings’—מבשר, *mebashar*, from the root בשר, *bashar*, which the Psalmist applies to this purpose³, ‘The Lord (Adon) gave (will give, יתן, ‘future) the word, great the company of the
 ‘preachers, of those that published it, המבשרות, *ha-mebasharoth*, feminine), the things preached,’ &c. This root *bashar* is the word for *flesh*, so cannot but present a most pleasing meditation to us, from the similarity, or rather sameness, between ‘good tid-
 ‘ings’⁴ and *flesh*. Hence this apostle describes the great mystery of godliness (της ευσεβειας, the right, acceptable worship) to be, ‘God manifested, made
 ‘visible in flesh.’ Accordingly we find this prophecy of Isaiah’s literally, as it were, accomplished⁵, when ‘Jesus went up into a mountain, and thence published his good tidings of peace: And before this, it is worthy of notice, that the first vic-
 tory

¹ Psalm lxxxv. 10.

² Heb. vii. 2.

³ Psalm lxviii. 11.

⁴ In Greek, as by St Paul’s quotation, Rom. x. 15. from the LXX. ευαγγελιον, gospel.

⁵ St Matth. v. i.

⁶ The *Alue Mebashri*, as Job calls his Redeemer, (Job xix. 26.) ‘God in my flesh,’ the word that Adam uses in describing his wife, *mebashri*, ‘of my flesh,’ Gen. ii. 23.

tory he got over Satan, that old serpent, and as a prelude of his full and final conquest, was upon an exceeding high mountain'. All this the evangelical prophet Isaiah alludes to, in further explication of the subject before us *—' In the last days,' (which the Rabbins acknowledge to be the days of the Messiah), ' the mountain of the Lord's house ' shall be established in the top of the mountains, ' and shall be exalted above the hills,' &c. ' And ' in this mountain ' shall the Lord of hosts make ' unto all people a feast of fat things—of wines well ' refined—and it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is ' our God, we have waited for him, and he will save ' us,' &c. To the same purpose, says Ezekiel *, ' I ' will take of the highest branch of the high cedar,' (the contents of the chapter in our Bibles call this ' the cedar of the gospel), and will plant it upon an ' high mountain and eminent; in the mountain of ' the height of Israel will I plant it.'

It will not be amiss to enquire into the reason, why these writers make so frequent mention of mountains and hills, in their prophetic raptures. From the Old Testament history it appears, that the idolaters had early begun, and did long continue, the abuse of solemnizing their impious rites upon such eminences — ' Upon every high hill, and un-

* St Matth. iv. 8—11.

* Isaiah ii. 2. See also his contemporary Micah, ch. iv. 1.

3 He says again, ch. xxv. 6—10.

4 Ch. xvii. 22, 23.

‘under every green tree.’ But whence they derived this practice may be a question. Perhaps they may be thought to have chosen the tops of mountains and hills to carry them nearer to their God, the heavens; as they are represented¹ to have been once foolish enough to have thought of building a tower, whose top ‘might reach unto heaven;’ and so, upon being disappointed of that grand project, might have had recourse to the *natural* heights of mountains, with the same view. But indeed this does not seem to have been the case: for however corrupted they were in religion, they were not, so far back at least, such fools in philosophy, as to entertain the idle conceit charged upon them by our wise men now-a-days, of imagining that ‘the sun and stars were at the back of such and such a hill.’ It is certain that the earliest of them had, by tradition, carried off the remembrance of most of the old dispensations of either typical institution or real transaction; and in all probability this among the rest, of dedicating mountains to their idolatrous uses²: either in reference, after that event happened, to the glorious descent upon *mount Sinai*, which, though designed for a peculiar purpose, would undoubtedly make a mighty noise among the neighbouring nations, and is old enough to be the origin of all the practices of this kind that we have any account of, in the most ancient annals of

¹ In our translation at least, Gen. xi. 4.

² Hosea iv. 13, &c.

of profane history : or, if this shall still be thought too particular an epocha, and belonging only to what some writers are pleased to call ‘ a stupid obscure handful of people ;’ let us suppose the custom we are speaking of to have been in commemoration of a more *general* affair, indeed of an universally interesting event, which would be long remembered, and has not been forgotten to this day, ‘ the resting ‘ of the ark upon the mountains of Ararat’ ; when all mankind literally, all the church spiritually, found deliverance and salvation upon a mountain. However disputable the origin may be, the fact itself is unquestionable. That great oracle, the Bible indeed of classical knowledge, Homer, is in every school-boy’s mouth, with his *Ζευ πάτερ Ἰδὴθεν μέδων*, Jupiter-upon mount Ida, Parnassus, Olympus, &c. These sacred presidencies of their deities, where they got, or fancied they got, responses and voices, are standing monuments of the practice. And Mahomet’s mountain, (which he went to, because it would not come to him), makes a flaming figure in the history of that diabolical ape. To reform or prevent these abuses, Jehovah reclaims all to himself, and, through the whole of his Old-Testament revelation, continues the symbolical appropriation, as he had done by the ark after the flood *, of mountains and hills, to typify his *power* in triumphing over them, and his goodness in proclaiming glad

* Gen. viii. 4.

2 Isaiah liv. 9. 1 St Peter iii. 20. 21.

glad tidings of *peace* from them. Hence; then; we cannot but see the striking beauty, as well as peculiar propriety of the description of her Beloved; given by the church in these words—‘Behold he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills,’ to shew the joy and triumph which he was to bring with him.

VER. 9.—*My beloved is like a roe, or a young hart: behold he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the window, shewing himself through the lattice.*

The comparison here is still relative to his *coming*, and descriptive of the swiftness of it. ‘Surely I come quickly,’ says the beloved himself. ‘As the lightning cometh, so shall the coming of the Son of man be.’ This was his coming in flesh foretold, ‘The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come.’ And so here, ‘Behold he leapeth upon the mountains’—‘Behold he standeth behind our wall.’ The mind is hurried on with a quickness that cannot be described, and which even the intermediate simile does not fully express—*Like a roe, or a young hart.* The translations keep the true reading here, or, which in the 7th verse they had rendered *and*. The word too for ‘roe,’ is צבי, *tzebi*, from its own root צבה, *tzebe*, different from צבא, *tzeba*, as I have explained already. *A young hart*.—עפר האילים, *opher haailim*,
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1 Rev. xxii. 20.

2 St Matth. xxiv. 27.

3 Malachi iii. 1. &c.

literally, 'dust of the ailim.' From the Concordances we find, that this epithet occurs only here, and in other two passages of this Song, so is peculiar to it: and the Lexicons explain it to signify 'dusted, or powdered over,' as they say the skins of these young creatures are. But might not our divinely inspired Poet, by this particular expression, have had some particular idea in his thoughts upon this occasion? The word dust, *עָפָר*, (the dust of which Adam was formed), when in any conjunction applied to the Beloved, has, I should think, a peculiar meaning, and might lead the mind to behold him in an attitude, which cannot fail to give pleasure to his people. One of the old faithful could view him under the character of Redeemer, in this light²; and believed that he should stand upon the earth, literally, 'arise in' *opher*, dust.

The description proceeds thus: *Behold he standeth behind our wall.* What this wall means, we cannot positively say. In a spiritual sense, it may signify his appearing, or taking up his stand, (so the root *עָמַד*, *omd*, implies), not only when, but likewise where, least expected. This is expressed here, as afterwards in prophetic language³, 'thine ears shall hear a word (*דָּבָר*, *dabar*, logos, the speaker) behind thee,' &c. *He looketh forth at the windows, skewing himself through the lattice.*—There is an appar-

² Ver. 17. and ch. viii. 14.

³ Job xix. 26.

³ Isaiah xxx. 21.

apparent incongruity here with the former position, in any sense that the common notion can put upon it; unless by supposing, as some do, that from behind the wall he was looking *in* at the windows, &c. which the true sense does not require, and the words will not admit. The preposition *מ*, *min*, (before windows and lattice), always and only denotes 'from,' or out of, as usage evinces, and can never be brought to signify *through*, in the forced sense of *into*. So we find it in its contracted form, *מ*, *me*, joined with this very verb¹, 'From (out of) the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.' Here the construction certainly limits the sense to looking forth. And, as the construction is the same, if not stronger, in the place before us, why not explain it in the same way? I am aware of the common prejudice entertained against what is called 'grammatical strictness,' in this language, and of the usual appeal to reason, where grammar is deficient, or gives such a sense as the mind will not submit to. In human compositions perhaps this might be ventured upon: But in divine dictates it is dangerous. And a safer way would be, to bring our minds to such a sense as grammar (God's grammar in this case) exhibits, or to let alone the few places (and but few, if any they are) where such grammatical inconsistency occurs.—However, few though they be, this place is none of them. The sense discovers itself, if we can only

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find :

¹ Psalm xxxiii. 14.

find out, in what respect 'windows and lattice' can be said to belong to the Beloved. The word חלון, *halnuth*, windows, comes by derivation from חל or חלל, *hal* or *halal*, which, among other significations, has 'to open, to begin,' according to which some interpret that passage¹, 'then began men,' &c. by 'then' was an opening to call on the name of the 'Lord.' The first time we have the word is in Genesis²—'Noah opened the חלון, *halun*, of the ark,' where the context warrants to translate it 'window,' in our acceptation of that word. This window, or opening in the ark, had been made by direction³, and is called תִּזְרָה, *tzer*, which carries the idea of 'clear or pellucid,' and is the singular of what the translations render noon-day, and what the Beloved maketh his flock to rest among⁴. The *halnuth*, windows, therefore, from this diversified account of the ark, which we know was typical, may here signify clearnesses, transparencies, or openings; and may have reference to those discoveries and manifestations of himself, those ἐπαγγελίαι, effulgences of Deity in old times, when he looked on the children of men; and when by these means the faithful of all ages were comforted with a sight, a glimpse, as it were *en passant*, a 'thru-a-window view,' of his day, the day of his tabernacling in flesh⁵. *Shewing himself through the lattice*.—The word

¹ Gen. iv. 26.² Chap. viii. 6.³ Gen. vi. 16.⁴ Chap. i. 7. above.⁵ St John viii. 56.

word for *lattice* is of uncertain meaning; **כַּחְרִים**, *kahkarkim*, plural: As a verb we find it in the book of Proverbs¹, 'the slothful man does not (**יִחַרְךָ**, '*ihark*') roast,' we read it, the LXX. *εἰσὺξεται*, prepare. We have it again, or something like it, in Chaldaic², 'neither was their hair (**יִחַרְכֵּהוּ**, *hichhark*) 'singd,' and these three are the only places where we meet with it, which gives little satisfaction. We have another word for *lattice* entirely different from this³—'The mother of Sisera cried through 'the lattice,' **חַשְׁנָה**, *haashnah*, LXX. *δορυβάτης*, net-work. When usage therefore cannot, as in this case, point out the sense, recourse must be had to derivation. And here, if the rule be just, which critics in the language lay down, of resolving triliterals into their biliteral roots, where it can be done, our present word **יָרַח**, appears to be made up of **יָרַח**, *har*, hot, and **יָרַח**, *rak* soft or tender, so will apply to the text in the Proverbs, of preparing venison, making it soft by heat; and here, in application to the Beloved, may mean something under this double etymological character of both 'hot and tender.' But how to carry this into interpretation, I own, is the difficulty, and must be cautiously attempted; only with this satisfaction, that there is no more grammatical hindrance to my way of referring this word to the beloved, than to the common one of applying it to the bride's windows. The verb, too, **מֵצִיץ**, *metzitz*, which we read, 'shewing himself,' is of much

¹ Chap. xiv. 27.² Dan. iii. 27.³ Judges v. 28.

much fuller comprehension. The root is צִיץ , *tzitz*, to blossom or flourish, as on our margin, ‘flourishing.’ Hence comes the noun *tzitz*, for ‘the golden plate,’ the same with the holy *nazar*, ‘crown’ on Aaron’s forehead — ‘On himself, on David, the beloved, shall his crown, *nazara*,’ (LXX. το *αγιασμα*, sanctification), *itziiz*, LXX. *ἐξανθισαι*, flourish;’ and it has affinity with *natz*, to shoot out in sparks, or points, to sparkle, glitter, &c. So the *harkim*, lattice, from which he flourishes and sparkles, may, as parallel to the windows, be another description of his prefigurative appearances in their consequences or effects, as both warming and comforting the heart with a soft and quickening heat; similar to what, we read, was actually the case in the days of his conversation upon earth. ‘Did not our hearts *burn* within us, while he talked to us by the way, and *opened*, *διηνοργεν*, to us the ‘scriptures’?’ Do we not find the Beloved on this occasion, literally, as it were, carrying into act the present emblematical representation of him, ‘looking through the windows, flourishing, sparkling, ‘through the lattice,’ as introductory, by the explanation I have given, of what follows.

VER. 10.—*My Beloved spake and said unto me, Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away.*

From this, to the 15th verse inclusive is the Beloved’s

¹ 1. cv. viii. 9. transferred Psalm cxxxii. 18.

² St Luke xxiv. 32.

loved's speech from the church's mouth ; not by way of dialogue, as if he were personally present, but a monody or soliloquy of her own, rejoicing in, and publishing, under a flow of beautiful allusion, his gracious call and invitation to her. The beginning of it, in this verse, needs little or no comment : only I cannot help taking notice of the way and manner, in which that gracious call is here said to be given ; not by a bare inward impulse, or a fancied impression on the imagination, as is too often pretended, but described in the same terms, and under the same form with the authoritative dictates and communications which we call ' revelation,' as ' God spake unto Noah, unto Abraham, ' unto Moses, &c. saying ;' so here, ' my Beloved ' spake and said unto me.' The language is the same ; let the same doctrine be drawn from it. *Rise up, my love, &c.*—*Rising*, we know, denotes a change of posture, and implies that a previous falling, sitting, or lying, had taken place. The calls of the Beloved oft begin with this : so Isaiah lx. 1. ' Arise, (*קום*, *kumi*), shine,' &c. which St Paul thus enlarges upon¹, ' Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead.' So said Jesus to the dead girl², *Talitha kumi*, ' Damsel arise.' This not only points out the meaning of the call, but likewise shews the power given of obedience to it. Of this we have a similar instance, in common life, when we observe a call to, or, as we properly term

¹ Ephes. v. 14.² St Mark v. 41.

term it, upon, a person in sleep, working an effect which we see is felt, but can hardly be described. So is the case with the Beloved's call upon the church, and upon every believer. It infuses life, motion, power; not only commands, but enables us to arise. There can be no rising without this call, from sin, security, or the grave. We may slight or reject it, even when we are forced to hear it. The sluggard hears the awakening call; he cannot keep from hearing it, so far it works 'irresistibly' upon him; but his slothful desire after 'a little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep';¹ hinders him from complying with it, as does the willing, active, industrious labourer, when awakened from his sleep. We see this hold in things natural, and it does so in things spiritual. There is a difference between *hearing* and *hearkening*; the former is an impression on the organs, and must go first, the latter is an operation of the will, and must follow, to produce effect. So is it with the Beloved's call, we may refuse to hearken to it, but we cannot be without hearing it. *Rise up and come away*—*לכי לך, leki, leka*, come along, the usual Hebrew phrase in such cases. So says our Lord², 'Come unto me,' *δευτε*, as we usually say 'come,' to one another, by way of invitation, not necessarily implying locomotion, or action, in those to whom it is addressed; but,

¹ Prov. i. 24. Isaiah lxx. 12, &c.

² Prov. vi. 19.

³ St Matth. xi. 28.

but, (as in the Psalm), ‘O come, לֵבִי, *leku*, δευτε, ‘venite, let us sing’;’ thus exciting, encouraging, prompting, and from the Beloved’s mouth, in a peculiar manner, quickening, strengthening, and supporting. ‘This δευτε, ‘Come, ye that labour, and ‘are heavy laden,’ if from a deep sense of our weak and impotent condition, we attend to, and rejoice in, and comply with it now, will in the end bring us to the joyful sound of that truly powerful and attracting δευτε, ‘Come—ye blessed of my Father*.’

VER. 11.—*For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.*

There is little occasion for, and less edification by, guessing from such particularities as this, in what season of the year this poem was written; especially as we know, that our seasons do not correspond with those in the land of Judea. In the spiritual view, all that is said here might have been said at any time, as our Saviour’s parable of ‘the sower going out to sow,’ does not fix the time of it to the sowing season. The allusions made use of here are easily interpreted. Winter, we know, is a time of cold and indolence; the face of the earth frozen and chilled, all vegetation stopped, and whatever depends on light, heat, and warmth, in a languishing state. Put all this in a spiritual dress, and it will readily appear what we ought to make

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* Psalm xciv. 1.

* St Matth. xxv. 34.

of it. The church has witnessed, every believer has felt, what the word for *winter* imports. It seems to come from סַח, *sath*, to irritate, to stir up, mostly in a bad sense¹; so denotes the time of troubles, temptations, rough boisterous assaults; a time ugly and unpleasant in itself, and dangerous in its consequences. *The rain is over and gone*.—The original word here marks a change of condition, such as is wrought by the call of the Beloved, when the Sun of righteousness dispels the dark, dead, winter state of the soul, dries up the overflowing rains, the black, lowering, uncomfortable face of things, changes it to a pleasant, delightful, vivifying condition; as it follows—

VER. 12.—*The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.*

The earth, in the abstract, as here used, stands in scripture for all nations, all lands, mankind in general, and often for the wicked in distinction. At the time of which the Beloved here speaks, at the voice of his call, the flowers (הַנְּצִנִּים, *hanatznim*, the shoots, sparkles, glancings, as above noticed) appear, or are seen upon the earth: not, as in nature, from, or out of, the earth, as its own *production*, but upon it, as an extraneous *induction*, adorning and beautifying the face of it. Something of this

¹ 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. 1 Kings xxi. 25.

this kind we find predicted in many passages of scripture, alluding to those occasions when, thro' the cheering influence of the Sun of righteousness, 'flowers appeared on the earth,' and the church rejoiced in the appearance. The earth in general was adorned with these flowers, but the church *only* beheld and viewed them with delight and comfort. *The time of the singing of birds is come.*—'Of birds' is an addition, not in the original, and not necessary for any mode of explication. The Hebrew verb זָמַר, *zamar*, primarily signifies to prune, cut or clip trees, or shrubs, &c. in conformity to which, the LXX. here render it τομης, and the Vulgate, 'putationis,' pruning. Hence it is used for singing, speaking in metre, in measure, or in pruned, regular dressed sentences, as prose with us is called 'sermo solutus,' loose unpruned discourse; so seems not so much to denote singing in our acceptation, (for which I think the Hebrew has another word, שִׁיר, *shir*), as composing, ordering matter for singing, which we call poetry. With this view it is usually rendered psalm; and David is called 'נָעִים זְמִירָה, *noim zam-ruth*, jocundus in psalmis) 'the sweet Psalmist,' not for his singing only, but principally for his composing something to be sung. The Latin verb 'cano,' has this double idea of singing and composing; so has the Greek αἰδω, αἰδοῦ. This leads to the idea here, not confining it to birds, in which sense I do not know if ever it is to be found, but in its custo-

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mary application to psalms, hymns, compositions of sacred art. The time or season for this is approaching, is at hand, 'the time of the desert's 'blossoming as the rose', (the flowers appearing on the earth), when 'the lame' shall leap as an hart, 'and the tongue of the dumb shall sing,' realised again and again in New Testament times, and expressly directed to by St Paul¹, 'speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs;' and also by St James², 'Is any merry? (ευθυμει, 'well-disposed), let him (ψαλλετω) sing, or make 'psalms.' *And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.*—The Targum upon the Canticles, which, we are told, was the work of a Rabbi Joseph, long after Onkelos, and far down in the christian times, understands this of the Holy Ghost; and the interpretation is not at all despicable; whether we take it as the genuine sentiment of the Targumist, or as borrowed from the history of the descent at our Saviour's baptism. But it may be applied to Christ himself, from a similar expression³, 'O deliver not the soul of thy turtle unto the multitude,' &c. Either of the two may be received, and will justify the explication I have given of the former parts, as pointing to the happy time of Christ's being ushered in with the 'voice of one crying in the 'wilderness,' and that voice seconded by the influence

¹ Isaiah xxxv. i.² Ver. 6.³ Ephes. v. 19.⁴ Chap. v. 13.⁵ Psalm lxxiv. 19.

ence of the Holy Ghost upon the voices of the apostles. *Is heard in our land.*—Literally, *on our earth*, on the earth, on the land belonging to us. The Beloved speaks to the object of his love, and speaks of a land that was peculiarly hers, chosen, selected, consecrated by Himself, imparted, communicated to Her, so what we would call CHRISTIAN land; different from, and somehow or other exalted above, earth, that is, earth in general, common earth. We have the same distinction with the same emphatic view, where the Psalmist says, ‘Truth shall spring out of the earth’¹, the humanity, (the truth, completion, reality, of all the types and shadows),² shall spring from the dust of the earth, by being born of a woman³. ‘And our land (אֶרֶץ, our *earth*), our thus sanctified christian land, shall yield its increase, literally, shall give a ‘jubilee.’ In this land, clothed with this particular, appropriated appellation, was the voice of this turtle heard, נִשְׁמָה, *nishmo*, received, obeyed, hearkened to. In the other parts, out of this pale, heard indeed, as to the sound of it⁴, but not listened to, not believed in, according to the old complaint of the prophet⁵, ‘Lord, who hath believed our report?’ תִּהְיֶה אֶמְנָה אֵלֵינוּ⁶, literally, as on the margin, ‘the hearing of us,’ that which they heard from us. ‘That hearing they may hear, and not under-stand,’

¹ Psalm lxxxv. 11.² St. John i. 17.³ Ver. 12.⁴ Psalm xix. 4. quoted Rom. x. 18.⁵ Isaiah liii. 1.⁶ Rom. x. 16.

‘stand’, has been an early infatuation, and still is sadly verified in spiritual things. Yet there always has been, and still is a portion of that land, that hears, believes, understands the soft gentle inviting voice of this heavenly turtle, ‘The voice of the turtle is heard in *our* land.’

VER. 13.—*The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell; arise my love, my fair one, and come away.*

It is observable how frequently these two trees are classed together in scripture. ‘Every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree,’ is a current expression, sometimes historically², and sometimes prophetically applied³. Naturalists tell us, that for timber they are two of the most useless insipid trees that grow; and the truth of the remark has long been acknowledged. Yet these two trees, however weak and unprofitable otherwise, are remarkable for their sweet, delicious fruits. May not this teach us, (as most things in nature are spiritually instructive), that fair fruits, καλα ἔργα, good works, may be produced somehow or other from trees, and by instruments of very poor unpromising appearance? *The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs*—פְּגִיָּה, *paggiah*, her spungy lifeless things. And the tree itself, תַּאֲנֶה, *tanah*, (by derivation from אָנָה, *anah*, to grieve,

¹ St Mark iv. 12.

² *Inter alia*, 1 Kings iv. 25.

³ Zech. iii. 10.

grieve, lament, fret) was early an emblem of grief and mortification. Adam and Eve girded their loins, the natural seat of shame, with a girding of fig-leaves¹, which are rough and prickly, thereby wearing what is equivalent to sackcloth, which penitents since have been in use to wear next their skins. Hence, it may very fitly be called the 'tree of repentance and humiliation,' putting forth, as here, its flagging, faintish, spongy appearances at first, by degrees, and in progression, ripening them into strong, balmy, valuable fruits. *The vines with the tender grape give a good smell.*—The vine, פֶּזַח, *gaphan*, from נָגַף, *nagaph*, to beat, or strike against, so the stricken, flapping, limber stick. In an emblematical sense it has a double aspect, and is applied sometimes to the church², sometimes to Christ³, who said of himself, 'I am the true vine.' It is well known that the vine, from its weakness, cannot support itself without the elm. So neither can the church, without her elm Christ, nor the humanity in him, (the vine of our flesh, which he assumed to bear the wrath,) without the elm of the Divinity—⁴ 'The Son of man, whom thou madest strong for thine own self.' In general it will be allowed, that the 'fruit of the vine' is sacramental. It has always been so. Noah's wine⁵,
from

¹ Gen. iii. 7.

² Psalm lxxx. 8. Isaiah v. 2. Hos. x. 1.

³ St John xv. 1.

⁴ Psalm lxxx. 17.

⁵ Gen. ix. 21.

from the history and consequences of it, was of this sort. Jacob's blessing of Judah ¹ refers to this : and Jotham's apologue ² speaks of it 'cheering God and 'man.' The heathens carried off this allusion, and had their Bacchus and Silenus, deities of exhilaration by wine. In New-Testament style, it has connexion with the 'kingdom of heaven,' and is predicated by Christ of himself. So that upon the whole, do we not see a similarity between that part of the Beloved's voice here about the fig-tree and the vine, as explained in their emblematical usage, and the voice of the turtle's harbinger ³, 'Repent, (or 'as he afterwards enlarges upon it, bring forth 'fruits meet for, worthy of, repentance), for the 'kingdom of heaven is at hand?' This was the *spring* time of the gospel, when the winter of darkness and ignorance was past, when the rains, the overflowings of ungodliness ⁴, were over and gone ; the verdant, refreshing time, when the fig-tree, the tree of repentance, put forth her tender early shoots, and the vine, with its cheering, strengthening juice, began to give its smell, as a gracious warning of what was to follow. We cannot but observe too, how beautifully this call of the Beloved, this proclamation of good tidings here, in the various terms of description, points to the bodily senses ; and thro' these channels conveys knowledge, meditation, comfort into the soul. The flowers appearing on
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¹ Gen. xlix. 11. 12.

² St Matth. iii. 2.

³ Judges ix. 13.

⁴ Of Belial, Ps. xviii. 4.

the earth, regale the sight, the voice of the turtle delights the ear, the vine refreshes the smell. Every part, every faculty of our frame, has its corresponding object in the œconomy of grace, and all exhibited to us under bodily figures. The observation could be confirmed by numberless instances: and it certainly must afford us great pleasure in our present pilgrimage to find it so. Well might the Beloved, after having drawn such a charming landscape, charming in the sound, but exquisitely more so in the sense of it, repeat his invitation, his alluring, awakening, invigorating, invitation, ‘Rise, my love, my fair one, and come away.’ With what vehemence, what ardour of entreaty, he renews, enforces, dwells upon his proposal! Who will, who can, resist such sweetly engaging motives? Who can be deaf to, or reject such solicitous, such endearing love? But this is not all: For he adds:

VER. 14.—*O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.*

I have already observed the purport of the appellation DOVE, given to the fair one. But why represented in this situation, is worthy of our enquiry. That it implies a quiet retired kind of concealment, whether out of modesty, or for safety, is evident, and in the pastoral sense needs no illustration,

tion, if that were all we wished to seek after. The spiritual application opens up a higher view. *The clefts of the rock*—חַגֵּי הַסֵּלַע, *hagui haslo*. The word for clefts comes from the verb חָגַג, *hag*, to describe a circle, so is used to signify a festival, from its coming regularly about in the circle of the year, and from dancing circularly in it. As ¹ where the God of Israel says, 'Let my people go, חַגֵּי that they 'may hold a feast unto me;' and the Psalmist ² speaks of going to the house of God with the multitude, חַגֵּי, *hugg*, (ἑορταζοντες, LXX.) that keep holyday, &c. The word for rock is *slo*, and, as we have seen before, belongs to Christ; especially when, as it is here, in connexion with the church, according to the well-known promise ³, 'Upon this rock (that is, as most of the Fathers following St Paul expound it, upon himself) 'will I build my church;' which sufficiently discovers to us the propriety of the allusion before us, and what concern the church has with the clefts of the rock. I know the expression is in scripture applied to others, as to Edom ⁴, 'Thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock.' But this no way impairs the strength of my explication. The apostates, we know, were in use to corrupt and pervert all the types, symbols, and emblems of Jehovah's institution, to their own idolatrous imaginations. As far back as Moses' time, we find this symbol used under another word, צֶדֶד, *tzur*, and complaints of the abuse of it, which gave occasion to this

¹ Exod. v. i.

² Psalm xlii. 4.

³ St Matth. xvi. 18.

⁴ Jer. xlix. 16. Obad. ver. 3.

this exulting declaration of its superior value, 'Their rock is not as our rock, our enemies themselves being judges'. Here is a pointed opposition, and by the same word, between the *rock* of the church, and the rock of the heathen : and it is worth the taking notice of, that in all these places, the LXX. render the word for *rock* by Θεός, God ; and more expressively, in confirmation of what I am advancing, they make the enemies rock plural, Θεοί, 'their gods are not like our God.' So the clefts of the rock, that Edom gloried in, her gods of defence, are not like what belong to the dove here, though both the prophets, whom I have quoted, apply the very words of the Song to Edom ; and these are the only places where the word for *clefts* is taken in that foreign acceptation. But though the words are the same, the idea and use are entirely different. To the one, the dove, the church, it bespeaks comfort ; to the other, Edom, the apostates, it will land in confusion : as is threatened in parallel terms by Isaiah ², 'In that day, a man shall cast his idols of silver—to go into the clefts (not *hagui*, our word, but *nequeruth*, the proper word for that idea) of the rocks, for fear of the Lord,' &c.

In the secret places of the stairs.—The word for stairs, *medargah*, is of uncertain meaning, because

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rare,

¹ Deut. xxxii. 4. 15. 18. 30. 31.

² Chap. ii. 20. 21

rare, only occurring again in Ezekiel¹. But the other word, **סֵתֶר**, *satir*, secret, is of frequent use, and often applied to Jehovah; as ², ‘He made darkness ‘his secret place,’ LXX. ἀποκρυφην.’ ³ ‘I answered ‘thee in the secret place (ἀποκρυφω, LXX.) of thunder.’ Hence the heathens derived their *Saturn*, their secret lurking god, who reigned in *Latium*, (from *lateo*, to lurk, be hidden), the *hidden country*. The word is used to denote protection or shelter. ‘Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence,’ (LXX. ἀποκρυφω τὰ πρόσωπα σου, the concealment of thy face) from the pride of man⁴.’ And still more particularly, in terms similar to the language before us, ‘In the secret of his tabernacle he ‘shall hide, secrete me, he shall set me up upon a ‘rock.’ These passages, and such like, help to elucidate what are the secret places of the dove’s residence here, and what the *medargah* is, to which these secret places belong; some particular, peculiar display of protection, shelter, favour from Christ to the church, of which the mention of *rock* and *secret*, words of such mystical import in scripture, cannot but give us a proper idea.

In this happy situation, and under these privileged circumstances, he calls upon her in what follows: *Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice.*

¹ Ch. xxxviii. 20.

² Psalm xviii. 11.

³ Psalm lxxxi. 7.

⁴ Psalm xxxi. 20.

⁵ Psalm xxvii. 5. compare Psalm xl. 2.

voice.—Thy countenance, מַרְאִי, *meraicha*, thy appearance, אִפְּךָ, *LXX.* not countenance only, but person, form, and figure, all that can be seen, the visible church, whether seen by the world or not, seen by Christ, and conspicuous also in the world. ‘Ye are the light of the world; a city set on an hill cannot be hid.’ *Let me hear thy voice.*—This is a frequent scripture precept, and should always be remembered, as our warrant for doing what the Beloved requires of us, ‘Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee.’ This is the foundation on which the church builds her hope of acceptance. Without this, her voice of any kind of prayer or praise, supplication or thanksgiving, would be but a dead empty sound, an εὐλοθρησκεία¹, a will-worship, no way satisfying to ourselves, no way acceptable to him. But with this, as an introduction, as our ground of assurance, he tells her, ‘thy voice is sweet,’ אֶרְבָּ, *orb*, Heb. mixt. The church’s voice to Christ is mixt, compounded of wishes, vows, supplications, doxologies, mixt with fears, raptures, rejoicings, depressions, therefore sweet, agreeable, pleasant to him. ‘My meditation of him shall be sweet,’ literally, as in the Hebrew and *LXX.* ‘shall be sweet unto him’². ‘It is good to sing praises unto the Lord, for it is pleasant, and praise is comely,’ the *LXX.* have it, sweet

¹ St Matth. v. 14.³ Col. ii. 23.² Psalm l. 15.⁴ Psalm civ. 34.

‘sweet unto our God’.¹ ‘Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense’.² ‘Incense with the prayers of the saints’.³ This accounts for the sweetness of the church’s voice. We read of a sweet incense, incense of sweet spices⁴, a composition and mixture of perfumes, or odours for typical purposes, and thus sweetened from Christ’s own institution, and by his own acceptance. What a mighty encouragement is this to the church in general, and to all her devout members in particular, to comply with the Beloved’s call, ‘let me hear thy voice;’ and cordially to echo back with the Psalmist, ‘My voice shalt thou hear in the morning’.⁵ *Thy countenance is comely.*—This will be more fully described when we come to the 6th chapter. The invitation here may be thus expressed, ‘O my dove, my chaste, faithful, retired church, in the festivities of thy habitation upon me thy rock, under the secret covering of my protection, let thy voice of prayer and praise be directed to me, let me see thy appearance regular and orderly while I am in the midst of thee; for thy voice is to me a pleasant mixture, and thy appearance altogether delightful.’

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¹ Psalm cxlvii. 1.

² Psalm cxli. 2.

³ Rev. viii. 3, 4.

⁴ Exod. xxxv. 28. and xxxix. 38.

⁵ Psalm v. 3.

VER. 15.—*Take for us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes.*

This address is plural; ‘take ye;’ but both by grammar and context, may be assigned to the Beloved’s speech in continuation, and points out its own meaning. The word here for vines, כרמי, *kar-mi*, is properly vineyards, and belongs more expressively to the church. ‘My beloved hath a ‘vineyard’.’ ‘Go ye unto the vineyard’.² ‘The ‘vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel’.³ This vineyard, the church, is a tender delicate thing, and has enemies that disturb, perplex, or do all that they can to ‘spoil’ it; all which the Hebrew מחבלים, *mehablim*, signifies. Sometimes the boar of the wood, the wild, rapacious nasty savage, doth waste it’.⁴ Sometimes the ancients, and princes themselves, the dignitaries, and men of authority in it, eat it up’.⁵ Here it is said to be in danger from foxes, little foxes, sly, wily, cunning, night-roving creatures, ‘false brethren, ‘that come in unawares’⁶; that creep into houses, and lead captive the weak’.⁷ ‘O Israel, thy prophets are like foxes in the deserts’.⁸ This creature is an old emblem of enmity to the church. Jeremiah laments the desolation of Zion, from this

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² Isaiah v. 1.

³ Isaiah v. 7. &c.

⁵ Isaiah iii. 14.

⁷ 2 Tim. iii. 6.

² St Matth. xx. 1—7.

⁴ Psalm lxxx. 13.

⁶ Gal. ii. 4.

⁸ Ezek. xiii. 4.

consideration, 'that the foxes walk upon it': so low reduced was it, so miserably sunk, that even the inferior tribes of vile mischievous animals insulted over it, and made a very foot-path of it; like the Ammonite Tobiah's taunting scoff, when the church was in a very low degraded state², 'That which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone-wall.' And a prophetic denunciation is expressed under this figure³, 'They shall fall by the sword,' so minutely broken, that 'they shall be a portion (*μερίδες*, LXX. bits) for foxes.' Much sneer has been thrown out about the famous story of Samson's catching three hundred foxes⁴; as if the thing was not only unlikely, but even impossible. Yet as the history of Samson shews that he had miraculous strength, why might he not have had miraculous swiftness too, as was the case with Homer's great hero Achilles, and is a distinguishing part of his character, that he was *ποδας ωκυς*, swift of foot? And if we believe that Samson was under divine impulse, (as St Paul places him in his catalogue of worthies⁵), it will not seem too much to suppose, that God brought the foxes somehow or other to his hand, for the purpose of making these types of hatred to his church, the instruments of punishment upon her enemies. From the introduction of the foxes here,
and

² Lament. v. 18.³ Nehem. iv. 3.³ Psalm lxxiii. 10.⁴ Judges xv. 4.⁵ Heb. xi. 32.

and with the addition of little, 'the little foxes,' we may learn that the church is in danger even from little things; perhaps more so than from what may be thought greater causes of peril, as experience fully proves. All the cruelties of the old heathen persecutors, those wild boars of the wood, were not by far so destructive to her, as the crafty subtle attacks of the little foxes that crept in upon her afterwards. These, as in the emblem, so in the reality, prey upon, and grub at, the tender grapes of the vineyard, the early shoots, the young and rising generation. They are not able to damage the stock, or pull up the roots, but nibble at these delicate opening buds, which are less capable of making resistance, and so the more liable to their malignant impression. This has ever been the method of all heretics, these truly little foxes, to begin with the raw, weak, unexperienced part of the church, and if successful with them, to proceed to higher attempts. And it is still the way of the grand deceiver, to send abroad his little-fox-sins, as we may call them, first to spoil the tender grapes of piety and godliness, as both outward acquaintance and inward feelings will testify. Yet we see here how the watchful eye of the Beloved perceives this secret fox-like craft, and frustrates its base design. 'I the Lord do keep the vineyard; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.' — *Take for us, catch, apprehend* (πιάσατε, LXX.)

the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vineyard, all the little vermin of mischievous deceivers, that steal into, and corrupt, infest, and trouble the church: *for our vineyard has tender grapes,* the church has her little ones, that are not to be offended¹, the weak in the faith, who are to be tenderly dealt with². And the several vines have their early shoots of devout feelings, blossomings of grace, openings towards a full vintage, ‘like the new wine forming in the cluster’³. O let it not be ‘marred, for a blessing is in it.’

VER. 16.—*My Beloved is mine, and I am his. He feedeth among the lilies, until the day break, and the shadows flee away.*

I have here joined the beginning of the 17th verse to the 16th, upon the authority of the Alexandrian LXX. which does so, though both the Hebrew and English Bibles divide them. But division into verses is only a modern invention, not many hundred years old, and therefore not necessarily to be adhered to, where the context directs otherwise, as here I think it does. ‘*My Beloved is mine.*—(Heb. to me) *and I am his,* (Heb. to him), mutually connected to, and possessing one another. It is thus that Jehovah speaks, ‘I will be your God, (Aleim, God to you), and ye shall be my people,’ (people

¹ St Matth. xviii. 6.

² Rom. xiv. 1, &c.

³ Isaiah lxx. 8.

(people to me). And it is this condescension in Jehovah that warrants, it is this only that can warrant, the church's confidential exclamation here. This it is that founds the marriage-relation between Christ and the church, without which, all our knowledge, virtue, or goodness, if we could have any, would stand us in no stead. 'Thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of hosts is his name'. 'In that day, saith the Lord, thou shalt call me my husband,' (Heb. *יְשִׁי*, *ishi*, ἀνὴρ μου, LXX. *my man*, as our vulgar express themselves)², 'for I will betroth thee unto me for ever'.³ Among all nations, it has been the custom, and certainly derived from original institution, for the husband, the man, to make offer of himself first, and to choose, seek, court the bride. The practice holds in, because designed for, matters of spiritual concern. 'We love him, because he *first* loved us'.⁴ The address comes, and must come from him. No marriage without this, no connexion with, no title to, no claim in him, but by and from his own antecedent obligation. It is his own goodness that obliges him to proffer his love; it is the proffer of his love that obliges us. Hence comes that mutual obligation, which constitutes what we call *religion*, as implying obligation on both sides, on God's side primarily, on ours in consequence. So there is no

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natural

¹ Isaiah liv. 5. Jerem. xxxi. 32, &c. applied 2 Cor. xi. 2.

² Hosea ii. 16.

³ Ver. 19, 20.

⁴ 1 St John iv. 19.

natural religion, in the common acceptation of that phrase, no inbred notions, or innate ideas, for our direction, no voluntary election on our part, and originally, as meritorious of acceptance, or founding a title. Suppose we should or could say, from natural choice, what the church says here, in the latter part, 'I am his,' I have a natural knowledge of him, I belong and have given myself up to him, my heart loves him, and all that, what would it all avail us, unless we can join with her in the first part, and say, 'My Beloved is mine?' And what ground have we to say this, without his own declaration, his own condescending offer of himself to us? Natural experience points out the analogy of this, so is against natural religion, and for the absolute necessity of revelation. 'We love him, because he first loved us,' is an apostolical comment, and I hope a good one, upon our fair one's joyful rapture, 'My Beloved is mine, and therefore I am his.'

He feedeth among the lilies.—I have already observed, that the word for *lilies* has in it the radical idea of delight or rejoicing; so is not peculiarly expressive (as is usually paraphrased with none of the best of views) 'of purity and innocence and an unspotted fame.' Other flowers, as the rose for instance, might be imaginary emblems of this as much as the lily: but every Hebrew word has its own particular meaning, which fixes the interpretation, and all beyond that is no better than fancy.

We

We have certain Psalms inscribed to something under this word—¹ ‘To the chief musician, a song of loves, upon *shoshannim*, the lilies, rejoicers,’ &c. ² ‘Upon *shushan eduth*, and ³ upon *shoshannim eduth*, the lilies, &c. of the testimony.’ So says the Psalmist elsewhere ⁴, ‘In the way of thy testimonies (*eduth*) I have rejoiced, *shashti* ;’ and ⁵ ‘thy (*eduth*) testimonies are the rejoicing (*shushan*, lily)’ of my heart.’ The LXX. in all these titles of the Psalms, render our word for lilies, ἀλλοιωσιμενον, ‘going to be changed,’ as if it were from *shannah*, ‘to change ;’ which may give a good enough construction in doctrine, but has no foundation in grammar, which never doubles the first radical. For both grammar and usage give the meaning to be joy, or delight. So mount Zion is called the *meshush*, ‘joy of the whole earth’ ;⁶ and ⁷ the daughter of Jerusalem the same. Among these *shoshannim*, lilies, joyful things, the Beloved feedeth, *haroe*, LXX. ὁ ποιμαίνων, participially feeding as the shepherd ; which needs no criticism to direct the application. The author of the 80th Psalm had seen a connexion between *shoshannim*, lilies, and the Shepherd of Israel : the author of our Song sees the same connexion, and adopts the same language, ‘the Shepherd among the lilies.’ And why not believe him to be there himself, however uncouth

¹ Psalm xlv.² Psalm lx.³ Psalm lxxx.⁴ Psalm cxix. 14.⁵ Ver. lxxi.⁶ Psalm xlviii. 2.⁷ Lament. ii. 15.

couth this may appear in pastoral style, even feeding himself, rejoicing, delighting, somehow or other, as this same royal bard paints him, under another character', 'Rejoicing always before Jehovah who 'possessed him, rejoicing in the habitable parts of 'the earth, and his delights with the sons of men.' Another inspired poet tells us what this delight was², 'I delight to do thy will, O my God :'. And the beloved himself uses an expression not much dissonant from feeding himself, and in terms similar to those of the Psalmist³, 'My meat is to do 'the will of him that sent me, and to finish his 'work.' This is his employment, his delight, his nourishment—'the lilies he feedeth among'—

Until the day break, and the shadows flee away.—The day of his manifestation in flesh, that joyful day, which all the faithful, in all ages, looked forward to, and prayed for, 'when the Sun of righteousness should arise with healing in his wings⁴;' 'when the day-spring, (*ανατολη*, the east, the *branch*) 'from on high should visit us⁵.' This day was to 'break,' so we read it; but the Hebrew more expressively, *נפח*, *ippuh*, blow or breathe, of the same root and sense with the tree or fruit called *apple*, to which the church had likened her Beloved. We have

¹ Prov. viii. 30. 31.

² Psalm xl. 8. interpreted by an apostle, Heb. x. 5—10.

³ St John iv. 34.

⁴ Mal. iv. 2.

⁵ St Luke i. 78.

have the word used in that remarkable prophecy of Habakkuk¹, 'The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall *speak*.' In several passages of the Proverbs², it is also rendered 'speak'; and between these places, and Habakkuk's prophecy, there is a similarity worthy of our notice. The Proverbs mention a 'false one speaking lies,' the prophet says, 'his vision shall speak, and not lie,' *hezib*, the same Hebrew word in both; that is, should not blow or breathe in vain, as the false pretenders did, but be the 'Amen,' the true and faithful witness³; as the Proverbs had expressed it before, 'He that speaketh truth, (Heb. *יפיה אמנה*, *ipilih amune*, the same with 'amen') shall shew forth righteousness,' the sun of righteousness, 'Jehovah our righteousness, made unto us righteousness,' &c. These places, compared with one another, for mutual elucidation, will apply, and give light, to the passage before us, 'till the day, the day-spring, as in St Luke, blow, breathe, expand itself, and give warning of the Sun's approach,' &c. 'then shall the shadows flee away.' Not the shades only, as we call them, of night and darkness, of black dark heathen ignorance and obscurity, which we know gradually vanished and fled away at the very breathing, blowing, beginning of Christ's appearance, when there were universal expectations of, and, as it were, preparations for, the

¹ Chap. ii. 3.² Chap. vi. 19. xiv. 25. xix. 5. 9.³ Rev. iii. 14.⁴ Prov. xii. 17.

the coming of some mighty person upon earth, but the shadows likewise, as represented in scripture, of types, emblems, ordinances, yea of the whole law itself. These were but the shadows of heavenly things¹, of good things to come², 'a shadow of 'things to come, but the body is of Christ³.' So says the Evangelist St John⁴, 'The law was given 'by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus 'Christ.' Truth, not as signifying verity in opposition to falsehood, for in this sense the antithesis will not hold, but as implying reality and substance, in contradistinction to the figures, patterns, shadows of institution before. This truth, reality, substance, was, (not 'given,' as the law was, as a new thing that had not been before⁵, but *synetos*), became, existed by, in, and with Christ. He was, and is the realizer of all, the light to dispel all darkness, the truth to re-assume all shadows into himself, the true vine, the true witness, the true one⁶. This therefore was the faith of the fair one here, the then church, that though she was for a time under shadows, under the gloom, as it were, of but a typical, adumbrating dispensation, and waiting in hope and patience for the breathing of the day, the perfect accomplishment of all that had been promised, yet she knew that in the mean time her Beloved was not idle, but still employed, unknown to, and
unseen

¹ Heb. viii. 5.

³ Col. ii. 17.

⁵ See Gal. iii. 16—19.

² Heb. x. i.

⁴ Chap. i. 17.

⁶ 1 St John v. 20.

unseen by her, in his grand undertaking, disposing, adjusting, ripening things for the execution of the glorious scheme. So we see christianity, as we call it, is not a random accidental stroke, a sudden display only, some hundreds of years ago, of Divine power, but a preconcerted, well-ordered, constantly and uniformly carried on plan of wisdom and love, hid, in a great measure, from the sons of men¹, but opened up by degrees, and revealed unto the church. Hence she could say, as here, in comfortable feelings of the present, and fixed assurance of futurity, that ‘till the day break, and the ‘shadows flee away, her Beloved feedeth among ‘the lilies.’

VER. 17.—*Turn, my Beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.*

A prayer this of the church, adapted to, and connected with, her foregoing declaration. What the roe and the young hart mean, we have seen already in the 9th verse. ‘*Turn, my Beloved.*—Not return, or go back, as may at first be thought, but *do, sab, circui, turn*, as in going round², go on in, or go about, thy great round, the mighty design thou hast undertaken, pursue the plan of thine own wisdom, by thine own means, and in thine own way. *Upon the mountains of Bether.*—The LXX. render this *κοιλωματων*, as from *κοιλο*, hollow. The margin has it ‘of division.’ There is no place

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¹ Ephes. iii. 5.² See chap. i, 12.

of mountain of this name, to be met with elsewhere in all the scripture; so recourse must be had to the radical sense of the word, which the margin has very properly given 'of division,' not in the general sense, but more particularly of 'dissecting, or 'dividing into halves.' It seems to be of sacrificial acceptation, and so is used where Abraham, *אֲבְרָהָם*, *ibether*, divided his sacrifices in the midst, and laid each piece, division, or half, against the other. And Jeremiah² speaks of those, who having 'cut the calf in twain, had passed between the *בְּתָרִי*, *'betheri*, halves, parts thereof.' This act of *bether*, cutting in two, constituted the ceremonial part of the *בְּרִית*, *berith*, the purification scheme, which we call *covenant*, and appears to have been of universal use. For we read in Curtius³, that 'the Macedonians pretended to purify their army, by making it pass between the parts of a bitch cut in two.' And Fleury, in his church history⁴, tells us, 'that in a persecution in Persia⁵, two christian virgins were accused of having poisoned the queen, and that the Magi declared nothing could cure her but by passing through between the bodies of these virgins cut in two, which was accordingly done.' May not the mountains of 'division' here have reference to this practice, with a view to the future sacrifice of him who was to be our *berith*, our covenant, our purification⁶, and was

² Gen. xv. 10.

³ Lib. x. ch. 9.

⁵ Anno 344.

² Chap. xxxiv. 18. 19.

⁴ Lib. xii. sect. 29.

⁶ See Isaiah xlii. 6. xlix. 8, &c.

was to be cut in two by the separation of the two constituents of his compound person, the Divinity from the humanity' ? Or, if this shall be thought too mystical, and, as it were, looking too far forward, may not the idea of dividing in two, signified by the word *bether*, lead our thoughts to his then state of not being as yet united to flesh, but divided from it ? And might not the church, in prospect of this union, though not yet effectuated, describe him, speak of him, pray to him, as *סב*, *sab*, going round with various purposes, but still to the same great end ; ' like a young hart,' having her eye directed to some particular meaning under this comparison, and expressing her faith that his then *bether*, divided, condition, would be done away, and a gracious, perfect, wonderful junction succeed, in accomplishment of that old, comfortable promise, of the seed of the woman², explained upon another occasion³, by *אחיה אשר אחיה*, *aeie asher aeie*, *ero quod ero*, ' I will be what I will be. Or, even after all, in application to the present church, and to accommodate this description to her in general, and to every faithful member in particular, the *bether*, division, here, may refer to a future period of final and irrevocable division, when the Son of man, the King (one of the Beloved's titles in our Song) shall make a separation, (division into two parts), as a shepherd (another of his titles) divideth

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¹ Psalm xxii. 1. St Matth. xxvii. 46.

² Gen. iii. 15.

³ Exod. iii. 14.

his sheep from the goats¹. Many of the scripture emblems are of this sort, looking backward and forward through all the **עלמים**, *all times*, ages, seasons of œconomy, and may be either taken in the complex, [as comprehending this extensive view, or adjusted to particular circumstances, as the particular situation of the church or believers requires. With a view to either of these senses, therefore, or to them all taken together, we may join in the fair one's address or prayer here, and joyfully say, in her emblematical language, 'Turn my Beloved, 'and be thou like a roe or a young hart on the 'mountains of Bether.'

¹ St Matth. xxv. 32.

CHAP. III.

VER. 1.—*By night on my bed, I sought him, whom my soul loveth : I sought him, but I found him not.*

THIS is another of those passages, at which careless readers are apt to be offended ; and which indeed the common acceptation presents in a light too much calculated to give such offence. We may therefore justly conclude, that the inspired writer, if we believe him to have been inspired, had no literal sense in his eye. There is no necessity to seek connexion between this and what goes before. We may as well labour to connect the Psalms with one another, and make out a continued history of the natural David's affairs from such a fanciful connexion. The experiment would soon convince us of the absurdity, and even impracticability of the conceit. These sacred odes are ranged in nothing of what we call method, but are detached pieces of poetical devotion, not at the arbitrary direction of the writer's own choice, but under the leading impulse of the heavenly muse. So may be, and so I think is the case with this *shir hashirim*, this Song, this collection of Songs :
not

not tacked together by any late invented rules of Aristotelian or Horatian art, but like the Psalms, broken, extemporary raptures, or effusions of promises, instances of condescension and goodness on the one part, and of devotional feelings, faith, hope, joy, and gratitude, on the other. *By night*, says the church, (no matter in what order, or with what connexion), *on my bed I sought*, &c.—Let me make use of a very general observation, that the transposition of an author's words may be extremely hurtful to his sense, and apply it to the passage before us: The order in the original and LXX. is 'on my bed in the nights.' Both have nights in the plural, so the sense cannot be confined, as the eclogue fancy does confine it, to one particular night, nor represent one particular limited time or season for this action of the bride's. I know both the Hebrew and the Latin plural, 'noctibus,' may be, and in some cases are rendered singularly, as we say, by night and by day, or 'night and day,' to express a continued succession of time. But this will not hold in the literal sense here, as it would aggravate the disgust to suppose this a continued practice. Yet the expression speaks of more nights than one, and must have some particular meaning. *On my bed—* על משכבי *ol meshachabi*. The root is שכב, *shachab*, to lie, lie down, jacere, cubare, and the context must direct the application. So here, in my lying, while I was lying, בלילות, *beliluth*, εν νυκτων, in the nights, among them, the nights, as the idea implies, of blackness, darkness, or absence of light. We have

reference to this in one of the Psalms¹, ‘ Though
 ‘ ye have lien (תשכבו, *tashachabu*) among the pots,’
 in a state of slavery or meanness (as Issachar is de-
 scribed under this word for pots², ‘ couching be-
 ‘ tween two burdens’) ‘ yet shall ye be as the wings
 ‘ of a dove covered with silver and gold,’ terms
 very similar to the construction of our Song. This
 points to the ‘ lying’ here in the nights, and is,
 I think, beautifully explained in the exhortation
 at our eucharistic service, mentioning what Christ
 has done ‘ for us miserable sinners, who lay in
 ‘ darkness, and in the shadow of death,’ &c. This
 is the state in which the church once lay; a state
 to which some of her individual members are often
 exposed, expressed by nights of gloominess, so-
 litary sadness, and *temptation*, as the contents of the
 chapter calls it. While in this condition, thus lying
 among the nights, the nights before the ἐπιφάνεια,
 the manifestation in flesh of the true Light, the
 nights when at any time that Light withdraws his
 shining, the church tells us, ‘ *She sought him whom*
her soul loveth.—The desire of all nations was al-
 ways the joy of every faithful heart. *I sought him.*
 —The verb is שָׁקַד, *bequesh*, which, the dictionaries
 say, signifies to seek more by zeal than by words:
 and is used by Malachi in a particular description³,
 ‘ The Lord (*ha Adon*, Psalm cx. 1. the made Lord,
 ‘ Acts ii. 36.) whom ye seek.’ We have frequent
 precepts

¹ lxviii. 13.² Gen. xlix. 14.³ Chap. iii. 1.

precepts also to this purpose. 'Seek the Lord, seek his face, his appearance'; *I sought him*, she says, *but I found him not*.—There is something of difficulty in this, as in the spiritual sense it seems rather uncharacteristic. Yet we know by experience that he has his times and ways of being found. Lying among the nights, upon beds, in supineness and indolence of either mind or practice, is neither the proper time nor place, ordinarily speaking, to find him. In extraordinary cases, indeed, and where his wisdom sees necessary, he is often found of them that sought him not. But in the regular course of things, christians must be in some sort active, 'casting off the works of darkness, putting on the armour of light', and 'not sleeping as others do'. So says the church—

VER. 2.—*I will rise now, and go about the city, in the streets, and in the broad ways; I will seek him, whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.*

Here we see her in exercise, yet without immediate success. *I will rise now*:—Not necessarily implying local motion, or inferring an immediate change from the posture of lying, but expressing a resolution to be active in her search, and use all possible means of discovery. We find the same
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¹ Psalm cv. 4. &c.

² Rom. xiii. 12.

³ 1 Thess. v. 5.

expression put into the mouth of a poor, miserable, forlorn being, in another parabolical description, which does not require its meaning to be adjusted to any literal sense—' I will arise, and go to my ' father,' &c. We are not obliged to suppose the youth literally lying or sitting, when he said this, only declaring his sense of his present sunk condition, and his earnest desire to get out of it. Yet I see something of an objection appearing on the face of this quotation, as if the conversion of a sinner was his own act, if not entirely, yet at least originally, which may be thought a dangerous doctrine, and contrary to that admirable prayer, ' Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings,' &c. But let it be remembered, that both in the Song, and in the parable, there are hints given, (which is all that can be done in parabolical narration), sufficient to set aside any such fancy. In the case of the prodigal son, he is represented as having been long in his father's family, well acquainted with, and still retaining a memory of, the many good things enjoyed there: Consequently, as having had the means of knowledge, and an early impression from the influence of preventing grace, which, like good seed sown, will some time or other produce fruit, either to edification, or, if abused, to destruction. The father in the parable could not with propriety be said to have given the prodigal any help when at a distance in a far country. But

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from the way in which he is afterwards introduced, we may conclude that his heart had been always warm towards him, his thoughts dwelling affectionately on him, and his eyes looking wistfully after him: 'While he was yet a great way off, his 'father saw him', &c.—had been expecting him, waiting for him, directing his eyes to the way in which his son went, and so perceiving him without being perceived by him. This was all that the parabolical father could be said to do: He did all that he could. Shall we not believe that the true, the heavenly Father, does the same? But in the Song before us, there is more to be urged. *I will arise*, says the church: Not of her own primary motion, or as an original suggestion of her own mind; but as the result of, and in obedience to, the call of her Beloved, which she had heard before¹. In answer to, and through the force of this, she replies here, 'I will rise now; similar to what we read of the Psalmist's devout resolution, 'When thou didst say, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek².' *I will arise, and go about—I sought him, but I found him not.*—Still the melancholy difficulty recurs. What! not find him, after so much labour in searching for him! What can be the reason of this? Let us pause a little before we pass sentence, and ask, Where it was that she sought him? *In the streets*

¹ Ver. 20.² Chap. ii. 10.—'Rise up my love,' &c.³ Psalm xxvii. 8.

streets of the city, and in the broad ways.—These are not the most likely places wherein we may hope to find him. Places of great concourse, whether for diversion or business, are not those, it seems, which the ‘delight of the devout soul’ usually frequents. There is one who tells us, that the broad way leadeth to destruction¹; so is not the proper place in which to seek for the Saviour, the Lord of life. Indeed we find this same royal bard, in another of his poetical works², personifying WISDOM, as standing in the top of high places, crying at the gates, at the entry of the city, &c. But what or who were his company there? The ‘simple,’ we are told, and fools, and such as wanted understanding; even as we find him really and actually, when in flesh, conversing with publicans and sinners. Yet it will not be said, that these were the ordinary places, in which his disciples were to seek or find their beloved Master. And I think it is worth the while to observe, that we seldom or never read of him walking in the streets or broad ways, but for the most part withdrawing himself to places of privacy and retirement; or, when at any time he appeared in public, it was in the *temple*, ‘the place which he ‘had chosen to put his name there.’ It was there, where, in the childhood of his flesh, his sorrowing mother, like the church in the Song, after three days’ painful search to no purpose, found him, busy even then in his divine employment. The history

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¹ St Matth. vii. 13.² Prov. viii. and ix.

of this real, well attested circumstance, may in some measure open up the intendment of the emblematical description before us. *The streets of the city, and the broad ways*, where the solicitude of the church sought her Beloved, but could not find him, may perhaps point to the long frequented, and still so much extolled paths of what is called 'Natural knowledge and rational enquiry;' where the philosophers and sages, (the merchants, as it were, the busy men of the city), assembled and made a bustle about they knew not what. These were the *great ones*, who made a figure in the streets and broad ways, and trusting to their own wisdom, like the Pharisees in their righteousness', despised others. Yet we see the Beloved was not there. And indeed in such a course of enquiry he never was, never is to be found. Natural knowledge, that is, the feelings and pressures of nature, under which we all groan in common, and of which we come to the understanding without a teacher, may discover to us, that we want something, but can neither direct nor assist our search; as the poorest idiot that breathes can feel himself sick, though he can do nothing for his recovery. So is the church here, in a consternation and hurry, restless and uneasy, while missing her Beloved, running hither and thither in quest of him, to those places of resort, where she naturally, but foolishly concluded she might find him. This indeed is nature. Our
wants

wants and sorrows drive us upon many shifts, and toss us from side to side. Every probability of success we grasp at; and except in one way, a way not to be attained by the voice of nature, or speculations of reason, we must lay our account to be disappointed.—‘ In the streets, and in the broad ways, I will seek him whom my soul loveth; I sought him, but I found him not.’

VER. 3.—*The watchmen that go about the city found me, to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth ?*

What these watchmen are, we shall see in our view of the 5th chapter, where, at the 7th verse, they are more fully spoken of. Meantime let it be observed, with what anxiety, and even as it were forwardness, the fair one here expresses herself. *Saw ye him whom my soul loveth ?*—There is no connexion in the original between her mentioning the watchmen, and her putting the question. Our translation inserts, *to whom I said*, which our language has been thought to require, more for the sound than the sense. But the beautiful abruptness of the Hebrew strongly paints the flutter and emotion of the devout heart. And we know, that ‘ out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.’ ‘ My heart was hot within me,’ says another man of God, ‘ then spake I with my tongue.’

‘tongue.’ Indeed it is to be regretted that the too great, and almost fulsome lengths, which some mistaken people of late have gone this way, should have scandalized the politer classes to such a degree, that it is now reckoned pedantry and ill manners, to speak with any appearance of warmth about spiritual things. Yet it is universally acknowledged, that the abuse of a thing is not argument sufficient to supersede the use of it. Why then should not this matter be better regulated, as it is much to be feared, that where the tongue is so affectedly silent, the heart is not very sensible? The church’s behaviour here, I think, is no bad warrant, and I have not the least doubt, but this inspired composition (as ‘all holy scriptures have been written ‘for our learning’) has been preserved upon record, to be our direction both for the matter and manner of this piece of christian duty. And what an honour would it be to our men of taste, who still profess the christian name, if, instead of prostituting their talents to the useless labour of heathen embellishment, they would in character employ them to the truly valuable and still possible work of regulating and refining our religious language. But another thing to be remarked in the behaviour of the fair one, on this occasion, is, her hasty passing on, and not waiting for an answer. No doubt we would be curious to know what the reply would have been. And we may recollect another occasion, on which a very important question was put, and no answer waited for: ‘Pilate saith unto him, ‘What

‘What is truth? And when he had said this, he ‘went out’.’ Between the two indeed, there is this difference, that in the latter case, the person enquired at could have given a satisfactory and decisive answer, which the watchmen I suspect could not. But this story of Pilate is not the only place in scripture, in which our curiosity is awakened, and left unsatisfied. There is another instance in our Saviour’s history, where we are told something, which I believe most readers would wish had been more fully related. * ‘The child Jesus was ‘found at twelve years of age in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing ‘them, and asking them questions.’ What a pity, do we not think, that there is not a particular account of these questions, and wherein that wonderful understanding of his consisted, which so much astonished ‘all who heard him?’ Such are our first and most natural thoughts in cases of this kind: but the plain state of the matter is, these and such like passages are designed, first to excite in us a desire after knowledge, if such knowledge be worth the desiring; and then to put us upon searching and examining the rest of scripture, by way of employment for the gratification of this desire. In both the instances I have mentioned this remark will hold good. As to the truth asked about by Pilate, tho’ perhaps it was a matter of mere indifference to the man himself, yet from that very one to

* St John xviii. 38.

* St Luke ii. 46.

to whom he put the question, we meet with ample satisfaction, where he says of himself, ‘ I am the ‘ truth ’ :’ And again, in his prayer to the Father, ‘ thy word is truth ² :’ Which two short and pointed declarations describe to us the ‘ nature and immutability of truth,’ more clearly and convincingly than all the many long-winded volumes of philosophic eloquence. And as to his conference with the doctors in his youth, though we find not what the questions were that passed between them, yet he himself tells us in general ³, that they were ‘ about his Father’s business ;’ the knowledge of which is the great scope of the scriptures, and ought to be the object of our diligent and daily study. So here, ‘ *Saw ye him whom my soul loveth ?*’ —an important question indeed, yet no answer was given. The question was too weighty to obtain a proper answer from that quarter. But it spoke the ardour of the heart, and soon found a favourable acceptance.

VER. 4.—*It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth : I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother’s house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.*

Let me again fix our thoughts on the particular
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² St John xiv. 6.

² Ch. xvii. 17.

³ Ver. 49.

fervency of the church's language : *Him whom my soul loveth*—no less than four times repeated in the compass of four short verses. Is this ornament of style ? No : The judges of style will either censure or despise it. Is it owing to a barrenness of invention ? The structure of the rest of the poem forbids this supposition. What shall we say then ? Why indeed, that this is a pattern for us to copy after, in our devotional intercourse with Him who ought to be the delight of our souls : And having such a pattern, let us neither be ashamed nor afraid to follow it, if our hearts be equally well disposed. May not examples of this kind warrant us in that, by some so much ridiculed, repetition of ' Lord ' have mercy upon us,' in our public prayers ? If the heart go along, shall not such importunity be accepted ? And if the heart go not along, what is the use of the most laboured multiplicity of varied expression, and fine turned periods ? *Him whom my soul loveth* seems indeed to be a favourite phrase with the inspired author of our Song : And I know not if it be needful to observe, that the word for soul (Heb. נֶפֶשׁ, *nephesh*, ψυχή, LXX.) is of large extent, and takes in the whole something, in which life consists. It is predicated of Jehovah, where it is said *, ' The Lord of hosts hath sworn by ' himself' (marg. ' by his soul.') And it is also thus applied to beasts †, ' Flesh, with the life (Heb.

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* Amos vi. 8. Jerem. li. 14.

† Gen. ix. 4.

'*nephesh*, soul) thereof,' &c. so must signify more than what we call the rational or spiritual part, as being distinguished from it': And, in the passage before us, it evidently denotes the affection, delight, and longing of the whole Being, including spirit, soul, and body, every part, capacity, or substance, that goes to the construction of the compound creature man, as specified in our Saviour's description of the first and great commandment².

It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth.—Hence we may see, that the Beloved is to be found, though not always just as we expect him, yet still in a time and way of his own. She does not tell us in what particular place or attitude she found him; but find him she did, and that is enough for us. He had seen her search, her anxious, laborious search. He had made a trial of her faith and perseverance, and now presented himself when and where he thought fit. Does not this speak comfort to the heart of the patient believer? Let us only imitate the example, and we may depend upon the effect that will be produced by it. Though the streets and broad ways do not point him out; though the watchmen can or will tell us nothing about him, let us not quit our love, or give over our assiduity. 'In due time we shall reap, if we faint not:' a little

¹ 1 Thess. v. 23. Heb. iv. 12.

² St Mark xii. 29, 30. enforcing Deut. vi. 4, 5.

the more diligence, and we shall be sure to find him. What a pity it is that so much labour, and seeking and striving and waiting should be lost for want of a little more? And is it not to be feared that this is too often the case? Yet even in natural life we are sensible how much our success frequently depends on a little more perseverance: A little last stroke of the hammer fixes the nail; a little farther searching discovers the treasure. So it is in things spiritual: The good ground are 'they who keep the word, and bring forth fruit with *'patience:'* patience under inward discouragements, as well as under outward distresses. Had the fair one here been disheartened by her frequent disappointments, and returned the way that she came, in a fit of sorrow or chagrin, what should have become of her? But she went on, encouraged by faith and hope, and in a moment was relieved from all her anxiety. It is a delightful observation, and I hope confirmed by frequent experience, that 'man's extremity is Christ's opportunity.' He will not try us, nor allow us to be tried above what we are able to bear; but, while he vouchsafes in wisdom to take us out of ourselves, and the paths of our own devising, or out of the 'streets and broad ways' of human presumption, he will not fail to point out a safer, because a more humble course, taking its rise from obscurity and retirement. 'In angulo cum libello—in a corner with a little book,' (the precious book of God's promises in Christ), was the motto of the pious and well-known Thomas

à Kempis. Every humble christian will make the same happy choice.

It was but a little that I had passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth; I held him, and would not let him go, &c.—Language, I think, cannot draw a more striking picture than is here presented to us. And we have the action both literally and emblematically described in the person of the then father of the church upon earth, the patriarch Jacob¹, and beautifully commented upon by the prophet Hosea². The church then, in her representative, found her Beloved, and held him, and would not let him go till he blessed her. This was a real display of his power and presence. The prophet tells us, it was Jehovah of hosts who now appeared: and it was not on Jacob's account, as a private individual, but in a public character, that this manifestation was exhibited to him. For the prophet says, that at that time Jehovah spake 'with us.' This transaction, so faithfully recorded by Moses, and afterwards referred to by Hosea, we may well believe is alluded to by the intermediate author of our Song. And these three accounts, from three such authors, compared with, and elucidating one another, will serve to throw some light upon that strangely-looking text³, where it is said, 'The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent

¹ Gen. xxxii. 24—30.

² Chap. xii. 3. 4.

³ St Matth. xi. 12.

lent 'take it by force.' Certainly in Jacob's case, a divine person suffered violence, suffered himself to be wrestled with, and even strengthened and enabled the poor feeble wrestler to prevail. In the case before us, the same may be justly said. A weak timorous woman, her heart beating with disappointment, and panting from anxiety, what strength could she be thought to have for such a struggle? Yet she did what Jacob did, 'she held him, and 'would not let him go.' It was the same object they were both engaged with, the same strength that enabled them both, the same condescension that yielded to their violence. Jacob's name was from this act changed into ISRAEL; and the church is both in scripture¹, and in christian language, called ISRAEL, under the same etymology from divine designation, of having power with God and 'prevailing.' What the arms, strength, and violence are, by which the church prevails in this struggle of faith and love, we have exemplified in her type², 'he wept and made supplication to him.' Prayers and tears, we see, *preces et lacrymæ*, have long been the *arma ecclesiæ*, the arms of the church: By these she has always succeeded, and without these she need never expect to prevail with her Beloved. Thus it is that she wrestles with God; it was thus that Jacob wrestled: 'I will not 'let thee go,' says he, 'except thou bless me—and
'he

¹ Rom. xi. 26. Gal. vi. 16.

² Hosea xii. 4.

‘he blessed him there.’ *I would not let him go*, says the church, *till I had brought him into my mother’s house, &c.*—This was the blessing she wrestled for, and she obtained it. But what is this blessing, and wherein does it consist? Let us examine, and with our old scripture key we may be able to open it up. *My mother’s house*—Who is the church’s mother? She herself is usually stiled mother; and ‘mother church,’ we know, is a common phrase; yet we read of one ancient, universal mother—‘Adam called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.’ To this old mother was the promise made, personally, of the seed of the woman; and from her was the church to spring. So struggling, weeping, and praying, to bring him (‘prevail with him to come,’ Heb.) into her mother’s house, is emblematical, optative, and predictive of his incarnation, of the accomplishment of the primitive and fundamental promise, when he truly, really, and personally came into this house, this mother’s house, peculiarly and exclusively so, as distinguishingly predicated of the woman; and in the accomplishment of which mystery, the man, as such, was to have no share. The prospect of this was the great object of all the prayers, wishes, fervent breathings of the faithful. To this the old mother herself looked, though eventually mistaken, when she said[†], ‘I have got a man, (אֵת יְהוָה *eth Jehovah*, Heb.) the very Jehovah.’ To this the second

[†] Gen. iii. 20,

[‡] Gen. iv. 1.

cond restorer of mankind, Noah, the double-vi-
 saged Janus of pagan mythology, the commissioned
 preacher of righteousness¹, had an eye, when in
 his prophetic rapture, after his spiritual inebria-
 tion with the sacramental wine, he broke out²—
 ‘Blessed be the Lord God of SHEM,’ the Jehovah
 who was to come of the loins of Shem, so to be
 his by right and title of descent, distinguishingly
 from cursed Ham or enlarged Japhet. This it was
 that all the ancient believers in their inspired devo-
 tions still longed for. So prayed the Psalmist³,
 ‘Stir up thy strength, (thy manhood) and come
 and save us.’ So said the prophet—‘O that thou
 wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come
 down⁴.’ So spoke the church here in her mysti-
 cal style, *Till I had brought him into my mother’s*
house. I would not let him go (לֹא אֶרְפוּ, *la arpu*,
 from רָפוּ, *rapa*, to assuage, abate, be lazy or remiss)
 she would not be lazy, remiss, indifferent about
 him, would not give over her cryings, supplica-
 tions, and wrestlings, but held him, אֶחְזִיתִי, *ahztii*,
 apprehended him⁵, kept possession of him, held him
 by way of *tenement*, (so the word signifies⁶), till the
 desired expected period of his answering her prayers,
 and fulfilling all her hopes. *Till I had brought him*
into my mother’s house: And then she adds—and
 into

¹ See 2 St Peter ii. 5. and compare Jer. xxiii. 6. 1 Cor. i. 30.

² Gen. ix. 26.

³ Psalm lxxx. 2.

⁴ Isaiah lxiv. 1.

⁵ See Philip. iii. 12.

⁶ See Psalm ii. 8.

into the chamber of her that conceived me.—But why this addition? There is something more in it, I suspect, than bare repetition or ornament. *Mother* is often mentioned in scripture, not only for the honour of the promise, but likewise for the memory of our original. ‘In sin,’ says the Psalmist¹, ‘did my mother conceive me.’ Even Job could say², ‘Man that is born of a woman is full of trouble,’ and then starts the difficulty, ‘Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.’ From the mother’s conception, we derive pollution, guilt, and defilement, from which we must be purified somehow or other, and cleansed. All mankind have been sensible of this, and felt the effect. The church knew the cause, and longed for the recovery. She knew that he, who was to be her redemption, was to be her sanctification too³, her *αγιασμος*, her purification, even that ‘without which no man shall see the Lord.’ For this purpose, and in remembrance of her own original unclean state by birth and nature, she here strives, and prays, and struggles, that he would come for sanctification and cleansing, into the chamber of her that conceived her. These were the blessings for which, in imitation of her old representative Jacob, she here wrestles with her Beloved; the blessing of redemption by his incarnation, and the blessing of sanctification by his blood. In the joyful

¹ Psalm li. 5.

² Chap. xiv. 1.

³ 1 Cor. i. 30. compared with Heb. xii. 14.

ful faith and hope of all which she again breaks out into that rapturous exclamation which I have explained already, and which, under that explication, we shall readily discover the propriety of applying to the present occasion, *I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, &c.*

VER. 6.—*Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness, like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?*

This seems to introduce a new description, or, as we would say, to open up a new scene. The LXX. by their feminine rendering, *τις ἡ ἀναβαίνουσα, τεθυμιαμένη*, apply this description to the woman, without any necessity from the words, or illustration of the sense. Both these evidently shew, that it belongs to the Beloved, and must be received as a representation, picture, or draught, in vision, as it were, of him, in some of his principal attitudes, either in prophetic or real history. Such visions or visionary descriptions are not unusual in scripture. The prophet Ezekiel saw visions of God¹. The apocalypse of St John is full of such visions. Isaiah had a vision of God in glory²; and in reference, as it were, to the text before us, he seems to have had some particular object in his eye, when he puts the question, *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed*

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dyed

¹ Chap. i. 1.² Chap. vi. 1.

dyed garments from Bozrah? We are at no loss whom to suppose the speaker here, but readily believe it to be an inspired rapture or unconnected ejaculation from the writer's own mouth. And why not view this question in our Song in the same light? The Beloved, the Messiah, has many various positions to be viewed in—various indeed in their outward appearance, but all tending to the same great end. Isaiah saw him in one: The writer of our Song sees him in another. The prophet's question, in the terms he uses, is not peculiar to him. The Psalmist had spoken the same language before², 'Who will bring me into the city of strength, (the root the same as in Isaiah); who will lead me into Edom?' The prophet takes up the subject, and asks, 'Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah (the strong city)? Both writers have the same view, and mutually illustrate one another. *Edom*, in Hebrew in both places אֱדוֹם, *adum*, with the passive *van*, carries the idea of man, made man, or humanity. *Bozrah*, בּוֹזְרָא, by usage, signifies vintage, storehouse, or stronghold, so expresses something relative to the Messiah in his humanity-state, as putting it on, acting in it, suffering, conquering, triumphing³. Does not some idea of this kind present itself in the words before us? *Who (or what) is this (or what figure or appearance is this) that cometh out of*

¹ Chap. lxi. 1.

² Psalm cxi. 19.

³ See Zech. ix. 12.

of the wilderness? *Cometh* is not expressive enough of the original: the word is *עלה*, *olah*, *cometh up*, *ascendeth*, and is so used '—Thou hast, *עלית*, *olith*, 'ascended up on high.' But what is the wilderness? The Hebrew is *מדבר*, *midbar*, (from the famous root *דבר*, *dabar*, he spoke), and is often used in scripture, but mostly in a typical and allusive sense, to denote the want of what *dabar* signifies, whence the Greek has rendered it *ερημος*, (as it were *αρημος*, made up of their alpha privativum, *without*, and *ημα*, *word*), and our language has called it wilderness. So said Isaiah², quoted by the Evangelists—'The voice of one crying in the wilderness,' *bemidbar*, in the then desolate wilderness state of the church, as the New Testament application specifies: and so we read in Jeremiah³, 'O generation, see ye the word (*dabar*) of the Lord; have I been a wilderness, (*midbar*), a dumb, wordless, unspeaking thing to Israel?' Sometimes this word, literally, but by a difference of grammatical formation peculiar to the Hebrew language, is rendered in the proper radical sense of speaking, as in the text already quoted from Isaiah⁴, 'Who is this that cometh, &c.' He himself answers, 'I that speak (*midbar*) in righteousness,' &c. It is certain, that in this sacred language, there is always a connexion of idea between the root and its derivatives, which may be traced in every instance, though in some with more difficulty

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¹ Psalm lxxviii. 18.² Chap. xl. 3.³ Chap. ii. 31.⁴ Chap. lxiii. 1.

than in others : And it must be by a comparison of places, which is both an useful and an amusing labour, that any such difficulty can be removed. Thus, in the present case, when we find two prophets applying our word *midbar*, in some meaning or other, to Jehovah, may we not infer that the speaker here in the Song, (whoever be the speaker), had some such mystical allusion in view, by using the same word, and in a rapturous question too, of parallel construction to that of Isaiah ? This coming up, or *ascent*, out of the *midbar*, wilderness, is expressed in language that implies or supposes vision, and under a visible similitude, as all vision real or enigmatical must be. This is Jehovah's own account of his way of doing : ' I have spoken ' by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, ' and used similitudes by the ministry of the prophets '.* Instances of this in scripture are numerous, and afford noble matter of pious contemplation. Our Song is full of such prophetic similitudes, which add to the beauty of it, and coming from such an author, must be received as exactly descriptive, whether we can see it to be so or not*.

The

* Hosea xii. 10.

† We have been accustomed to hear a great deal of the ' boldness of metaphor,' as it is called, so peculiar to, and ornamental of, the oriental style ; and modern philosophy has been busily employed in accounting for, and interpreting the scriptures upon this plan. May not a professional reverence, let it even be called prejudice, for scripture, especially with the acknowledged balance of vastly superior antiquity in
its

The similitude we have now before us is 'like pillars of smoke.' *Smoke*, we are told, was a frequent attendant on the manifestations of Jehovah. So it was in that great transaction with Abraham¹: So at the descent on Mount Sinai²: So in Isaiah's vision of the Lord in glory³: So in the emblematical language of the Psalmist⁴, and particularly in the very words before us by the prophet Joel, cited and applied by St. Peter⁵, 'blood and fire, and *'pillars of smoke'*⁶.' It is true, the word *smoke*, in our acceptation, conveys a disagreeable idea, and in scripture often implies terror and wrath, where it is said⁷, 'the jealousy of the Lord shall smoke against that man,' &c. But here it is sweetened, and the signification limited, by the addition in the context—*perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant*⁸. There was a typical action

its favour, reverse this specious hypothesis, and suppose the scripture-style, with its finely expressive similitudes, which Jehovah had exhibited to the understandings, and infused into the 'pens of his ready writers,' (Ps. xlv. 1.) to have been the original standard of imitation to those, who could steal the form, though they knew nothing of the design, and could, and did pervert both the style and the subject of the true God's revelations, to serve the ruinous purposes of the old deceiver?

¹ Gen. xv. 17.

² Exod. xix. 18.

³ Isaiah vi. 4.

⁴ Psalm xviii. 8. cxliv. 5.

⁵ Acts ii. 17. 19.

⁶ Joel ii. 30.

⁷ Deut xxix. 20.

⁸ Perfumed—מקטרת, *mequtbert*: It is this feminine termination that has led the LXX. to give the whole a feminine turn, and which our translators, if our language had had the feminine signs, seem to have adopted. But the particle מ, *mem*, in the beginning of the word, may

action instituted under the same word'; 'Take
 'unto thee sweet spices, with pure frankincense,
 'and thou shalt make a *perfume*.' And, that this
 perfume was to represent, not the virtues of the of-
 ferer, but the merits of CHRIST, his love, obedience,
 or sweet savour, we may gather from the particular
 exclusive care expressed about it. * 'Ye shall not
 'make to yourselves after the composition thereof;
 'it shall be unto thee holy for the Lord; whoso-
 'ever shall make like unto it, to smell thereto,
 'shall be cut off from his people.' There was a
 holy ointment likewise appointed to be made³, of
 myrrh and other ingredients, for anointing the sa-
 cred furniture, and under the same restrictive pe-
 nalty⁴. Here we see the use, intent, and applica-
 tion of *myrrh and frankincense*, as principal ingre-
 dients, in conjunction with other sweet spices, ex-
 pressed here by *all powders of the merchant*. The
 word for *powders* is אֲבָקָה, from אָבַק, *abaq*, the word
 for that action of the Divine appearance with Ja-
 cob⁵, which we render *wrestling*; and so, from its
 junction here with myrrh and frankincense, points
 out its pertinency to the object of this description.'

From

be not the He-ematic formative of the participle, but the preposition,
from, or with, as in what follows, מִכָּל אֲבָקָה, *mecol abequt*, with or
 from all powders, &c. So the meaning will be, that the pillars, spires,
 vapour (as in the LXX. of Joel, and in the Acts) of smoke, arise
 from the fumes of 'myrrh and frankincense,' &c.

* קָטַר, *quatr*, Exod. xxx. 34.

² Ver. 37.

³ Ver. 23.

⁴ Ver. 33.

⁵ Gen. xxxii. 24.

From all which we may, I think, justly enough conclude, that this passage exhibits to us a representation of the beloved in some of the characters of his assumed humanity, to which the ointment and perfume, and wrestling powders, did, by promise and oeconomy, more immediately belong. And on what part of this *wonderful* character can we more readily and consistently fix our eye, than on his 'mighty resurrection and glorious ascension?' His resurrection, I say, from the ~~7th~~ ^{7th}, the grave, hell, state of the dead, that wilderness, *mid-bar*, desolate land of silence', to which his body went down with an embalmment of myrrh and aloes', and where he wrestled with, and 'triumphed over him that had the power of death'*. Whether Nicodemus had, or had not a view to the antecedent types in this preparation of his, we need be under no difficulty to call it a fulfilling of the scriptures, when we remember, that upon a certain piece of behaviour in the soldiers, who certainly knew no more of these things than Nicodemus did, the same Evangelist tells us†, 'All these things were done that the scripture might be fulfilled.' Let us likewise take in, as I said, his subsequent *ascension*, since we have St Peter's warrant, quoted above, for bringing in the prophet Joel's 'pillars of smoke,' upon an occasion, which was consequent upon, and the effect of, this ascension; and since the

* Psalm lxxxviii. 10, 11, 12.

† St John xix. 39.

‡ Heb. ii. 14.

§ St John xix. 36.

the psalmist¹ foretels this ascension², under the same word used here, *עלה*, *thou hast gone up*. To strengthen which application, it may be observed, that both the Psalmist and Apostle mention 'gifts unto men,' along with this ascension; and the writer of our Song, in what follows, as we shall see when we come to it, speaks in the same strain. So then, if the Psalmist looks forward, as it is acknowledged he in many places does, to the resurrection and ascension of the Messiah, why may we not believe that Solomon, if under the same inspiration, does so too; when in words, which, by scripture usage, have a manifest relation that way, and which no boldness of metaphor can make sense of otherwise, he puts the question, no matter into what mouth, '*Who is this that cometh up out of the wilderness?*'

VER. 7.—*Behold his bed, which is Solomon's, three-score valiant men are about it, of the valiants of Israel.*

VER. 8.—*They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night.*

Although the explication I am offering neither requires nor supposes a regular chain of connexion between the various parts of this admirable Song;
yet

¹ Psalm lxxviii. 18.

² So applied by St Paul, Ephes. iv. 8.

yet I cannot help perceiving something, if not of connexion, at least of reference here, to what had gone before, though not indeed so apparent from the general run of the translations, 'Who is this 'that cometh up,' &c. *Behold his — which is Solomon's, &c.*—Our translation calls this a *bed*; and some paraphrasts, seeing the incongruity of this with what follows, would have it to be a bridal pavilion, conveyed upon wheels, though without any authority for the one more than for the other. There is something spoken of belonging to Solomon, and described too with all the pomp of military attendance. But that it should be either a common bed or royal pavilion, I see nothing either in the word, or in the context, to make us infer. The word is *מַטָּה*, in *regimine*, from *מָתָה*, *mathe*, the same as that, upon which Jacob worshipped¹, upon which he strengthened himself and sat²; and into which he gathered up his feet when he died³: In all which places our translation calls it *bed*; though in the first of these texts, the LXX. have given it a different rendering, which an apostle has sanctioned, by saying⁴, that 'Jacob worshipped upon the top of his STAFF.' This indeed is the radical and most common signification of our present word, *מָתָה*, *mathe*, *rod*, *staff*, and by metaphor from the twelve rods, 'tribe.' In this ra-

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¹ Gen. xlvii. 31.² Chap. xlviii. 2.³ Chap. xlix. 33.⁴ Heb. xi. 21.⁵ Numb. xvii. 2.

dical acceptation, we find it predicated of Christ¹, 'The Lord shall send the *rod* of thy strength out of Zion,' &c. which I would take to be a key to the passage before us; as upon this prophetic promise, it might with great propriety be replied, **הנה מטתו**, *hene mathtu*, 'behold his rod,' that rod of power, strength, and authority, by which he was to rule over his enemies. This *rod*, as our text by a peculiar construction of the words expresses it, was 'for Solomon,' **לשלמה**, *le shalme*, the peaceable, the church's peace, to subdue her enemies, and give her peace. It was by a *matha*, a rod, that Moses destroyed the typical enemies of the church², and this rod is called³ the rod of God. It was a *matha*, a rod of Aaron's that budded⁴, which St Paul mentions among other ordinances of divine service⁵: And what was it but the **ע**, *oz*, **δυναμις**, strength from Jehovah, that endued these rods with such marvellous qualities? It was such a rod that was promised to the Messiah, when 'Jehovah said 'to Adoni, Sit thou on my right hand.' Such a rod, at least something expressed by the same word, is here spoken of as belonging to Solomon. Moses and Aaron were but types, so was Solomon: They had their rods, so had Solomon too—a typical ensign of power and strength, especially in his typical character, as formed for peace. And to this sense

¹ Psalm cx. 2.² Exod. xiv. 16.³ Exod. iv. 2c.⁴ Numb. xvii. 8.⁵ Heb. ix.

sense the majestic appendage of guards and war-like attendants seems more directly to point. *Three-score valiant men about it, of the valiants of Israel, all girt with swords, because of fear in the night.*—We must enquire, from the expressions here used, who these valiants are? The design of this retinue is said to be, *because of fear in the night.* This is mentioned by the Psalmist, with a promise of protection from it¹, ‘Thou shalt not be afraid (מִפֶּחַד, ‘*mepahd*, our word here) for the terror by night.’ And of whom this is spoken, we may learn from what the same Psalmist says², as applied, though by the devil, yet we find justly enough³, ‘He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.’ These angels, be what they will, we are told, stood round⁴, protected, ministered to, the true Solomon, the prince of peace, upon two most trying and dismal occasions, at his temptation in the wilderness⁵, and under his agony in the garden⁶. These were nights, nights of fear, and as he calls them, ‘hours of darkness,’ when all the terrors of hell were let loose upon him, and consequently he needed the service of his ‘valiants’ to support him. The guards here spoken of, are called גַּבְרִים, *gabrim*, valiants; and accordingly we find a heavenly messenger under this name *Gabriel*, the valiant of God, employed in first reveal-

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¹ Psalm xci. 5.² Ver. 11.³ St Matth. iv. 6.⁴ Psalm xxxiv. 7.—encamped,⁵ St Matth. iv. 11.⁶ St Luke xxii. 43.

ing to Daniel the time fixed for the incarnation of the Messiah¹, and afterwards declaring the accomplishment of it both to Zacharias, and to the virgin mother²: In which employment, it is worth while to remark how consonant all the parts of divine dispensation are to one another. Zacharias asks the angel, 'Whereby shall I know this?' The angel answers, 'I am Gabriel.' Zacharias was a priest, and could not be ignorant of the predictions of Daniel about the time of the Messiah's coming; with propriety therefore the angel thus addresses him, 'I am Gabriel,' the very one who made that notification to Daniel, and am now sent in prosecution of the same plan, 'to shew these *glad tidings* 'unto thee.' So uniform is the Divine wisdom in the very circumstantialia of the grand scheme of redemption. These *gabrim* are said to have 'swords 'upon their thigh.' How is this applicable to angels? Let me answer this question by asking another, How is this applicable to Christ their head, their *Apex*³, the *el gibbur*, God made man⁴? Yet, of him it is predicated⁵, 'Gird thy sword upon thy 'thigh, thou *gibbur*, most mighty.' The psalm will explain the Song, and point out the analogy. Something of a resemblance to this may be perceived in the history of our Saviour's apprehension⁶, where we are told, that when one of the disciples drew a sword

¹ Chap. ix. 21.

² St Luke i. 11. 26.

³ St Jude 6.

⁴ Mighty God. Isa. ix 6.

⁵ Psalm xlv. 3.

⁶ St Matth. xxvi. 53.

sword, Jesus checked him and said, 'Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?' As if these were his ordinary standing guard, always ready at his call, and armed with swords of far greater force than any that mortals can wield. Accordingly St Paul spoke of 'the sword of the Spirit'; and surely knew the meaning of what he said. With these his 'valiants,' this mighty prince will be attended, when, at the consummation of this œconomy, he will destroy all his enemies with 'the rod of his strength.' The scripture never omits this circumstance in the account of that terrible day: And St Paul, in one place, expressly calls them, (in conformity to the language of the LXX. here, *δυνατοι*) *αγγελοι της δυναμεως αυτου*, 'angels of his power'. But why are there said to be *threescore* of them? Why does our Saviour speak of 'twelve legions' of them? It would seem he had in his eye some reference to the twelve tribes, or to the twelve apostles sitting upon twelve thrones¹. And there would be no great harm in supposing a resemblance between our Saviour's way of speaking, and the number specified in the Song. Threescore we know is twelve fives, and the Hebrew word for *five*, *חמשה*, *hemesh*, is used to signify military rank or disposition, something like the Roman legion, not for number, but for order,

¹ Eph. vi. 17.² 2 Thess. i. 7.³ St Matth. xix. 28.

order, as in Exodus it is said ¹, ‘the children of Israel went up harnessed (marg.) by five in a rank;’ and in Joshua ², ‘ye shall pass before your brethren, armed, (marg.) marshalled by five,’ &c. Or, if this shall be thought too fanciful or far-fetched, the Hebrew word for *threescore* presents another interpretation. It is ששׁים, *shashim*, from ששׁ, *shash*, to rejoice; so signifies the rejoicers, and is applicable enough to those valiants, of whom Jehovah himself says ³, ‘that they shouted for joy’ at the finishing of this κόσμος, world, ornamented machine, ‘upon the sixth day—יום הששׁי, the joyful, rejoicing day’ ⁴. They are said here to be expert in war, מלמד, *melamdi*, δειδαγμενοι, LXX. taught to, or instructed in, war. By what master or teacher? By Jehovah himself ⁵. —‘Blessed be Jehovah, my strength, מלמד, *melamd*, ‘who teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.’ And they are called the *valiants of Israel*. The church, as we have observed, is called Israel. The angels are servants or ministers to the church collectively ⁶ and individually ⁷, so may properly be termed the *valiants of Israel*. Let us bring together all these detached pieces of explication into one connexion, and we shall see what or who it is, that is here spoken of in such lofty and significant figures, as can neither be adjusted to what is called the literal

¹ Chap. xiii. 18.

² Job xxxviii. 7.

³ Psalm cxliv. 1.

⁴ Chap. i. 14.

⁵ Gen. i. 31.

⁶ Heb. i. 14.

⁷ St Luke xvi. 22.

teral sense, nor are any way reconcileable to the cried up 'simplicity of the pastoral dress.' And so likewise in what follows :—

VER. 9.—*King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon.*

VER. 10.—*He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.*

Commentators are much at a loss here ; as for what our translators have called *chariot* in the text, they have put *bed* on the margin. The LXX. have rendered it φορτισιον, as it were a carriage, from φερω, to carry ; in conformity to which, Jerom and the Vulgate make it 'ferculum ;' though it is as likely that the φορτισιον of the LXX. is only the Hebrew word אפריון, *aphriun*, put into Greek letters. The word is one of the ἀπαξ λεγόμενα, and occurs nowhere else. The interlineary version of Arias Montanus reads it in his text 'thalamum sponsarum,' a bridal bed, but has it on the margin 'edificium,' a building. In the first of these senses, Buxtorf brings it from פרה, *phareh*, to be fruitful ; and will have it to signify a marriage-bed, from its fruitfulness. And indeed there is some shew of probability for this derivation, as we have a scripture-precedent in the formation of a word much similar to this '—' Joseph

‘seph called the name of his second son אֶפְרַיִם, *aphrim*, Ephraim, for God הֶפְרַנִּי, *hephrni*, hath ‘made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.’ But there is another root that bids as fair for giving rise to this word; if we will but lay aside the notion of a bed or chariot, and that is, אֶפֶר, *aphr*, which is translated *ashes*, *powder*, or *dust*, either in a good or bad sense, and gives name to a country, אֹפִיר, *auphir*, Ophir, what we would call the Dust-coast, perhaps to our *Aphrica*, where the Dust-coast is well known. From this country, be where it would, Solomon got great quantities of gold¹; and gold of Ophir is proverbial in scripture. May not our word *aphriun* have some connexion with it, as there is such a sameness of letters, and the same mention of gold attached to it? Why it should be either bed or chariot, no reason has been, or can be given, either from the Hebrew itself, the Φορμα of the LXX. or the context. It may be a word framed on purpose, ‘pro re nata,’ as we would say, by the spirit of God, to describe some grand piece of workmanship of the true Solomon, for the benefit of his church. And what if I should say, that in the outward and emblematical representation here given, it points to that glorious fabric of the *temple*, in which, under either real or typical signification, all the parts of description will be found to meet? King Solomon was the builder of it, by a reserved privilege of revelation, which was refused to his father

¹ 1 Kings ix. 28. x. 11.

father David¹. The timber for it was brought from Lebanon; gold, silver, and purple, were expended in great abundance upon it: And on the whole; it was such a magnificent structure, as might well merit a particular appellation, and be spoken of by its inspired builder, under a name of peculiar and expressive appropriation. It was modelled, planned, and contrived by God himself. He furnished the materials for it; and when it was finished, He took what we might call—personal possession of it, by the residence of his Shechinah visibly in it; all which made it truly, really, and by way of property, the house of God. Such was the material *temple of Solomon*, as it is still, by way of emphasis, called: And, in the application to the archetypal Solomon, we shall find every article of this elegant representation beautifully analogous to, and descriptive of, some special blessing. The temple of Solomon, as a Divine residence, was but typical of a Divine residence in a closer and more intimate manner. ‘Behold I send my messenger², and suddenly (פֶּתָאִם, *petaam*, soon after this sending) the Lord, the *Adon*, (the distinguishing title of the Messiah³), whom ye seek, shall come into his temple.’ Into what temple? Let himself answer the question. ‘Destroy this temple⁴, and in three days I will raise it up:’ but he spake of the

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*temple*¹ Chron. xvii. 1—15, xxviii. 2—10.² Malachi iii. 1.³ Psalm cx. 1.⁴ St John ii. 19.

temple of his *body*¹. He had said before, by the mouth of one of his old prophets², 'Mine ears hast thou opened;' (or, as St Paul renders it³, 'a body hast thou prepared me') then said I, Lo, I come,' &c. This prepared body was the 'dwelling of the mighty one of Jacob, which was heard of at Eph-rata,' (אֶפְרַתָּה, *aphrte*, our very word almost), 'the temple into which the desired *Adon* was to come, which the enemies were to destroy, and He was to rear up again the third day. The church too is called the body of Christ, united to him as her Head⁴; and, in conformity to the Old-Testament style, is represented likewise as a temple⁵. To the church therefore, in conjunction with, and depending upon Christ, her real, though invisible residenter⁷, may be applied every particular of this *aphrium*, this mystical machine, which king Solomon is here said to have made (לָּו, *lu*, 'savva, LXX.) for himself. So stands the case between the true Solomon and his church, which he hath purchased with his own blood⁸, and hath purified 'savva, to himself, to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works⁹.

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¹ Ver. 21.

² Psalm xl. 6.

³ Heb. x. 5.

⁴ Psalm cxxxii. 6. compare Micah v. 2. St Matth. ii. 5.

⁵ Ephes. iv. 15. and v. 23. Col. i. 18, &c.

⁶ 1 Cor. vi. 19. 2 Cor. vi. 16. Ephes. ii. 21. Revel. xi. 1.—and as an house, 1 Tim. iii. 15. Heb. iii. 2. 5. 6. 1 St Peter iv. 17.

⁷ Psalm cxxxii. 14. St Matth. xviii. 20.

⁸ Acts xx. 28.

⁹ Tit. ii. 14.

What king Solomon thus made for himself, he *made of the wood*, literally, ‘of the trees,’ of *Lebanon*, the incense mountain, as the name signifies, constituted of members from all nations, to offer up *incense*, to remember, present, exhibit for daily acceptance, his merits, the grateful odour, perfume, sweet-smelling savour¹ of the sacrifice which the true Solomon, offered to God, of his own prepared body²; for our sanctification. *He made the pillars of it silver*.—So says this same writer in another place³, ‘Wisdom hath ‘builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven ‘pillars.’ ‘The earth,’ says the Psalmist⁴, (not in his own person certainly) ‘and all its inhabitants ‘are dissolved; I bear up the pillars of it.’ The church herself is called a pillar⁵, ‘the pillar of ‘truth.’ The pillars here are said to be *silver*, the emblem of whiteness, purity, and splendour: So the promise runs⁶, ‘Him that overcometh, will I ‘make a pillar in the temple of my God.’ The apostles are called *pillars*⁷; and we find a threatening under this metaphor⁸, ‘I have made thee this ‘day an *iron* pillar against this whole land;’ *iron*, the emblem of roughness and wrath—as⁹, ‘Thou ‘shalt break them with a rod of iron.’ *The bottom thereof of gold*—The bottom (*ανακλιτον*, LXX. stratum,

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¹ Ephes. v. 2.³ Prov. ix. 1.⁵ 1 Tim. iii. 15.⁷ Gal. ii. 9.² Heb. x. 10.⁴ lxxv. 3.⁶ Rev. iii. 12.⁸ Jerem. i. 18.⁹ Psalm ii. 9.

tum, Arias Montanus, reclinatorium, Jerom), Heb. רִפְּחִיד, *rephid*, the same word as in the second chapter, 'Comfort me (marg. strew me) with apples,' &c. So here it points to the comforting place, the place of principal design, or in general the whole spreading of it, the whole of it overspread with gold, as the principal parts of the material temple were overlaid with it¹, representing to us the riches of Christ². 'I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich.' What those riches of Christ are, of which gold has always been an emblem, I hope no believer is ignorant, when we remember in what exulting language the apostle speaks of the riches of goodness³, the riches of glory⁴, the riches of wisdom and knowledge⁵, the riches of grace⁶, the unsearchable riches of Christ⁷. With these riches, this gold, the church is overspread, strewed, comforted, adorned like the dove, (her darling appellation in this Song) described in that sublimely mystical psalm⁸, 'with wings covered with silver, and her feathers with gold.' In this sense, and with a view to his office, the apostle could say of himself, and his fellow pillars, 'As poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all

¹ 1 Chron. iii. 3—10.

³ Rom. ii. 4.

⁵ Chap. xi. 23.

⁷ Chap. iii. 8, &c.

² Rev. iii. 18.

⁴ Chap. ix. 23.

⁶ Ephes. i. 7.

⁸ Psalm lxxviii. 13.

'all things': always taking this along with us, that all this is Christ's doing, the workmanship of our Solomon—he made the rephid thereof gold. The covering of it purple.—Why our translators have called this covering, I cannot say. The LXX. have it *ἐπιβασίς*, consensio, mounting, going up, and the Latin much the same. The Hebrew is מרכב, *merkab*, from *rakab*, to ride, and is the word commonly rendered 'chariot.' What it means in the position here assigned to it, is not easy to determine. Perhaps the addition of *purple* to it may give some insight. Purple was much used about both the tabernacle and temple; and we read ² of a chariot (*merkab*, our word) for the cherubim. The place of the cherubim was separated from the rest of the structure by a vail of purple ³, &c. and that the *merkab* of purple here has some allusion to this, is highly probable. If so, we may warrantably conclude it to be some particular ornament of the church, represented here by purple, which was the usual robe of grandeur and majesty, as the appellation of *purpurati*, purpled ones for kings and nobles, indicates. Our Saviour, at his trial, was typically, though, because in mockery, undesignedly, clothed with purple, as King of the Jews ⁴. Purple too was one of the principal materials in the ephod and breastplate for the high priest ⁵. So the purple here,

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¹ 2 Cor. vi. 10.

³ Exod. xxvi. 31.

² 1 Chron. xxviii. 18.

⁴ St Mark xv. 17. 18.

⁵ Exod. xxviii. 6. 15.

as by practice peculiar to kings, and, by institution, to priests, may be emblematical of that particular decoration of the church, by which she is made collectively a royal priesthood¹; or, as St John expresses it, individually ‘kings and priests to ‘God the Father’².’

The midst thereof being paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem.—It is observable, that for the most part, if not always, in every obscure and enigmatical representation in scripture, we meet with something by way of index, to point out the meaning and design of the whole. So here in the description before us, this concluding clause is both so plain and so expressive, that a late paraphraser, who seldom steps out of his way to explain mysteries, could not but infer from this, that ‘all the ‘good things prepared for us have, for their foundation or ground-plot, the tender love of Christ ‘to our souls.’ The sense here could not be mistaken, and indeed cannot bear what is called a literal explication. *Paved with love*, will not easily quadrate with any chariot or bed, or material machine, that Solomon could make. So the spiritual sense must be applied to; and if in this part, why not in all the rest? There is something of difficulty about the word for *paved*. The LXX. render it λιθοστρωτον, as if a pavement of stone, which is not very proper, one should think, for a chariot or carriage,

¹ 1 St Peter. ii. 9.

² Rev. i. 6.

riage. The Hebrew is, *רֶצֶף*, *retzuph*, which but seldom occurs, and is variously translated. It is used by Isaiah in his seraphic vision¹, 'then 'flew one of the seraphs unto me, with *rexphe*, 'a live coal in his hand.' This was a touch of love², 'to take away his iniquity, and to purge 'his sin;' which idea will derive additional strength from the part here spoken of, *תְּכֻף*, *tuku*, the midst of it, LXX. ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ, the inner part, the within of it. We meet early with this word in the sacred history³ of the tree of life, *betuuk*, LXX. ἐν μέσῳ, in the midst of the garden, the centre, the most remarkable place, to be the adytum, the sanctum sanctorum, as it were, of this sacred grove: And it would appear from what follows, that this was a place, if not *the* place of divine presence; for we read⁴ of our first parents, that they hid themselves from the presence (Heb. from the 'faces') of the Lord God (*בְּתֹךְ עֵץ הָגָן*, *betuuk otz hegan*, LXX. ἐν μέσῳ τῆς ξύλης, in medio arboris, Latin, literally, in the midst of the *tree* of the garden. Our translation makes this additional clause plural—'amongst the trees of the garden;' and thereby, I fear, has, eclipsed the true sense⁵, 'Amongst the trees,' indeed,

¹ Chap. vi. 6.² Ver. 7.³ Gen. ii. 9.⁴ Gen. iii. 8.

⁵ Nor is this the only place where such unnecessary freedom with a capital word is to be met with: I shall just instance in another, where I cannot help having the same suspicion: In Proverbs xi. 14. and xxiv. 6. we read, 'In the multitude of counsellors there is safety;' which, however just in a moral or political sense, does not come up to the dignity

deed, is not only a needless deviation from the original, and from all the old translations, but likewise, by the run of the language, as commonly understood, exhibits our first parents in a strange kind of childish light, as thinking to conceal themselves in a clump of 'trees' from the all-seeing eye of their creator, which, fallen and foolish as they now were, is carrying the charge against them rather too far. Whereas, taking the words in their strict sense, and according to grammatical connexion, 'the presence of the Lord God in, or at, 'the *middle tree* of the garden,' we behold the offenders in the proper attitude of penitence and humiliation, conscious of guilt, and self-condemned, like the poor publican¹, not daring to look towards heaven, but standing afar off, and ashamed to approach the usual spot of blessing and comfort, the happy *tuuk* of this divine plantation². And if this garden was typical, as can be, and has been, demonstrated, of Christ³, and the church⁴, to whom I have said the description here does belong,

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nity of what the words in themselves, and as applied in other places, may bear. 'Salvation (*teshuac*, Heb. *תשועה*, Greek, *salus*, Latin, 'more than safety'), is in the great One, (*Rab*, Heb. see Isaiah xix. 20. 'a Saviour, and *rab*, a great one) the Counsellor,' (*iuotz*, Heb. singular, the very word used by Isaiah, as one of the names of the given Son, Isaiah ix. 6.

¹ St Luke xviii. 13.

² Gen. ii. 8.

³ The tree of life, compare Prov. viii. with iii. 18. xi. 30. xiii. 12. Rev. ii. 7. xxii. 2. 14.

⁴ Psalm i. 3. Jerem. xvii. 8. Isaiah lxi. 3.

we may learn whence, and how it is, that the *tuuk*, the midst of this mystical fabric of king Solomon's raising, is said to be *retzuph*, of, or with love. *For the daughters of Jerusalem.*—This needs no illustration, as in the sense which I have already assigned to it, the meaning and application are obvious: Or, if hold shall be taken of the Hebrew preposition **מ**, *mem*, (which we read 'for'), properly signifying 'from,' as the LXX. have rendered it, *ἀπο θυγατέρων*, 'from the daughters,' and the Socinian Le Clerc, in his degrading way, paraphrases it, 'wrought in needle-work, by the daughters of Jerusalem, as a testimony of their love,' let it be observed, that the word **בָּנִית**, *banut* (daughters) may, by grammar, be the infinitive of the verb *bane*, to build; so what goes before may be said to be *from* the building, the consequences and effects of building Jerusalem, in the sense of the Psalmist's prayer¹, 'Build thou the walls of Jerusalem,' and ² 'except the Lord build the house,' &c. In either of these significations, the application will be the same; the mention of love, as having a relation to Jerusalem, the mother of us all, speaks something beyond the letter, and presents the spiritual explication of this piece of mystical workmanship, in all its emblematical parts, to which the literal sense can give no coherent meaning; but which the humble 'searcher of the scriptures' will know how and where to adjust.

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¹ Psalm li. 18,² Psalm cxxvii. 1.

VER. 11.—*Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.*

By those paraphrasers, who wish our Song to be considered as a Pastoral, much labour has been employed to exemplify the *crowning* here spoken of, by heathen authorities, and other instances far posterior to this date. But they have not told us when, or where, it was usual for mothers to crown kings, or even bridegrooms: and Solomon stands here in both these characters. The ground of this fancy seems to be the way of pointing the verse in our translation, which joins the crowning to the espousals. But the original may be thus read, *Behold king Solomon in the day of his espousals, &c. with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him;* and so the espousals will belong to the act of beholding, not to the coronation. The address here is made to daughters, but under a new and particular appellation, which occurs not again in all the Song. *Daughters of Zion.*—This Zion, we know, was the sacred place of Jerusalem, and is distinguishingly called, ‘The city of David, the beloved.’ Hence the so frequent title of ‘The daughter of Zion,’ as the peculium, the chosen, favourite people. So we read in Isaiah², of ‘The virgin, the daughter of Zion,’ and of particular threat-

² 2 Sam. v. 7.

² Chap. xxxvii. 22.

threatenings ¹ and promises ² made to her. The Psalmist ³ tells us, that ‘the Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the tabernacles of Jacob ⁴;’ and the famous prophecy of Zechariah ⁵, is limited by Isaiah ⁶, and by the evangelists St Matthew and St John ⁷, to the daughter of Zion—‘Rejoice greatly, fear not, behold thy KING cometh,’ &c. All in terms, especially the historical accomplishment in the New Testament, so similar to the invitation before us, that there can be no doubt of its tendency to the same purpose.

‘Go forth, ye daughters of Zion, and behold your KING :’ Or, in the prophetic language ⁸, ‘that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth.’—But why, or whence, are they to go forth? The same prophet shall explain this ⁹: ‘Depart ye, depart ye,’ says he, ‘go ye forth,’ (the same word ~~was~~, *tzau*), as alluded to by the apostle ¹⁰, ‘Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord,’ &c. and by the Apoclypt ¹¹, ‘I heard a voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people,’ &c. The daughters of Zion, the chosen ones, are to go forth out of the earthly Jerusalem, out of the wisdom

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¹ Isaiah lii. 17.² Chap. iv. 4.³ Psalm lxxxvii. 2.⁴ See Psalm xlviii. 2. 1. 2, &c.⁵ Ch. ix. 9.⁶ Chap. lxii. 11.⁷ St Matth. xxi. 5. St John xxi. 15.⁸ Isaiah lii. 7.⁹ Ch. lii. 11.¹⁰ 2 Cor. vi. 17.¹¹ Chap. xviii. 4.

of the world, out of the bondage of sin, out of the sufficiency of self, before they can see and behold their King. Thus it was that the prophecy was literally fulfilled: 'Much people *went forth* to meet him, and cried, Hosannah, Blessed is the King of Israel, &c. the true, the real Solomon, (Son of 'David'), the Prince of Peace.'

In the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.—It is acknowledged that this, and some other such-like expressions, convey the idea of a marriage; and indicate this composition to be something of what is called an epithalamium, or marriage-song. But let it be remembered, that though there be frequent mention of a bridegroom, in character of a king, a beloved, and even many times called by the name of Solomon, yet there is no specification of any particular woman, as such, to whom the title of bride is given. So that all the fine things brought out of the storehouse of imagination, or heathen example, to illustrate the female character here, must either pass as fiction, or be construed in another way. I find much stress laid on the expression in this place, *the day of his espousals*; and a difference among commentators, whether to fix it to the first or third day of what they call the 'seven days feast.' But the scripture use of the word *day*, gives no such handle. 'The day of thy visitation—this thy day' —it

† St John xii. 13,

‡ St Matth. xxi. 9.

‘—it will come to pass in that day,’ &c. are common and well-known scripture phrases. CHRIST’S marrying his church is a continued work, and the whole progress of it is a day, or, as the prophet extends it¹, a time of love. ‘In that day, saith the ‘Lord’², thou shalt call me Ishi, my husband,’ &c. ‘and I will betroth thee unto me for ever’³.’ What particular day is this, I would fain know? And why such affected preciseness about the *day of espousals* here in the Song? Let scripture decypher scripture, and we shall be at no loss to find out what it unfolds. This day, this time of espousals, is said to be *the day, the time of the gladness of his heart*. So says the prophet Isaiah, in the same style, ⁴, ‘As ‘the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall ‘thy God rejoice over thee,’—and ⁵, ‘I will rejoice ‘in Jerusalem, and joy in my people.’ So says Jeremiah ⁶, ‘They shall be my people, and I will ‘be their God’—’ ‘And I will rejoice over them to ‘do them good.’ All which is testified of Christ in person, by the evangelist St Luke ⁷, ‘In that hour, ‘(what hour was this?) Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and ‘said,’ &c. This grand work, the execution of the eternal counsel of love and mercy, was and is the delight, the joy of his heart, as predicted by the Psalmist ⁸, and applied by the apostle ⁹, ‘I delight
‘to

¹ Ezek. xvi. 8.³ Ver. 19.⁵ Chap. lxv. 19.⁷ Ver. 41.⁹ Psalm xl. 8.² Hosea ii. 16.⁴ Isaiah lxii. 5.⁶ Ch. xxxii. 38.⁸ Chap. x. 21.¹⁰ Heb. x. 5—10.

'to do thy will, O my God; thy law is *תורתי*, be-
 'tuuk moi, in the midst of my bowels';' and so in
 the midst, the *tuuk* of the 'temple of his body,'
 containing this delightful treasure, and thereby, in
 our bard's mystical language, *retzuph*, paved, flam-
 ing, yearning with love,

There remains a circumstance here worthy of
 our notice, and which seems to have some diffi-
 culty in it. *The crown wherewith his mother crowned*
him. We must look into the history of the typical
 Solomon, to find out the meaning of what is here
 said of him. His mother's name, we know, was
 Bathsheba, whose connexion with David makes
 such a striking figure in the history of that great
 monarch. That there was a fault, a grievous fault,
 in David's way of procedure, we have too certain
 evidence to admit any doubt. But that there was
 at the same time a divine purpose to be answered,
 by bringing David and Bathsheba together, I think
 may be gathered from the conspicuous manner of
 Divine interposition in the whole course of it. The
 royal succession, and the typical promises, were li-
 mited, not only by David, but by Jehovah himself,
 to the issue of this woman; and there is a declara-
 tion in the prophet Nathan's message to David on
 this

¹ Bowels—the seat of pity and compassion in man, and predicated of
 God, (Isaiah lxiii. 15.) 'Where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sound-
 ing of thy bowels, and thy mercies,' &c. ? Jerem. xxxi. 20. 'Is Eph-
 'raim my dear son?—my bowels are troubled for him,' &c.

this occasion, which, when duly weighed, makes it appear that there was a secret counsel to this purpose, before David knew any thing of it: 'Thou shalt not die; howbeit, because by this deed, thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, therefore the child that is born to thee shall surely die.' How are we to understand this? The deed was certainly a most flagitious one, and of such a nature as could not but give great scandal to every friend and fearer of God. But that the wicked graceless part ('the enemies of the Lord' in that sense) would be offended at it, is not very likely. Kings forcibly using their subjects' wives has been no uncommon practice, and we have read when and where it has been little thought of by libertines, who I presume have been of the same principles in all ages; and in David's time perhaps as much as any. Yet this deed of his is here said to have given such a handle of blasphemy, of contumelious speaking against the Lord and his doings, (so the word *נאץ*, *natz*, is applied in scripture, to those who 'contemned, lightly regarded the counsel of the Most High'), that nothing but the death of the child could remove it. The 'enemies of the Lord,' in scripture-style, are chiefly they who ridicule his dispensations, despise his counsels, and deny or laugh at his revealed promises, the scoffers, whom St Peter

¹ 2 Sam. xii. 4.

² See, *inter alia*, Psalm cvii. 11.

ter speaks of¹, and Isaiah seems to have had in his eye². And Nathan, as a prophet, may well be thought to have not only pointed to the present, but likewise to have looked forward to what might be, and probably would have been the consequence, if not prevented, of this deed of David, in after times. David³ had acted both precipitately and cunningly in this matter, and had dealt very slyly with Uriah the husband, to get him made a cloak to Bathsheba's pregnancy. Had this first child lived, and the succession, with all its consequences, been carried on through him to CHRIST's time, how would the atheists, the scoffers, the despisers of revelation, (those declared enemies of the Lord), in all ages, even in our own age, have reviled and blasphemed upon the occasion, the so well grounded occasion, of the uncertainty whether this ancestor of the Messiah was the Son of David, as the promise said, or of Uriah the Hittite! But behold the wisdom of Jehovah, in the execution of his own immutable plan! The child of doubtful parentage dies. The Lord might have smothered him in the womb; but he lets him come to light, both to publish David's transgression, and magnify his own wisdom; and then takes him away, to leave the enemies no occasion to blaspheme. Bathsheba, the very same Bathsheba, bears another child, the famous Solomon, when there could be no longer

¹ 2 St Peter iii. 3.

² Chap. v. 19.

³ As we read 2 Sam. xi.

2 We have the affair at full length i Kings i. 11—40.

that too concerning the Messiah and his various offices¹. This swearing, or oath of Jehovah, St Paul reasons upon²; as confirming the immutability of the divine counsel, and makes a special application of it³, with this conclusion⁴, 'that the word (λογος) of the oath constituteth the Son, who 'is consecrated for evermore.' The crowning therefore of the Messiah, the typified Solomon, is the product, the result of an *oath*; appointing him either to his kingly office⁵, or to his priestly⁶, and may be said to be the act of his mother, the spiritual Bathsheba, with relation to, and as denominated from, this *oath*. How the other particulars of the inthronization of Solomon, in the transaction between David and Bathsheba, referred to above, may be adjusted to the spiritual interpretation, would be worth the while to examine, but is not before me at present. All I propose, and I hope it is no digression, is only to elucidate and apply this special circumstance of bringing in Solomon's mother here, which I cannot help thinking is so strangely disfigured, and that too without either foundation or use, by the low and unmeaning turn that is commonly given to it,

CHAP.

¹ So he sware to Abraham about the promised seed, Gen. xxii. 16. 18. applied Gal. iii. 16. and to David more particularly, Psalm lxxxix. 35, 36, 37. and cx. 4.

² Heb. vi. 17.

⁴ Ver. 28.

³ Chap. vii. 21.

⁵ Psalm ii. 6, 7, &c.

⁶ Priests were crowned, Exod. xxix. 6. and the word עֲטָר, *otbr*, here does not necessarily imply a king's crown, but, in general, a girding round, a fillet, a chaplet, a *διαδήμα*.

CHAP. IV.

VER. 1.—*Behold thou art fair, my love, behold thou art fair, thou hast dove's eyes within thy locks; thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Mount Gilead.*

FROM the third verse of the second chapter down to this, we have seen nothing of the Beloved in person. We have indeed met with some joyful soliloquies of the fair one concerning him, or lofty descriptions of his goodness and greatness, partly put into her mouth, and partly from the pen of the writer. But here he again makes his appearance, and in his former endearing style, *Behold thou art fair, my love*, &c. It would be idle to ask, and superfluous to explain, in the sense I contend for, what this fairness is, or whence it comes. The forty-fifth psalm pays this same compliment to the king Messiah¹, and he sends the commendation down to his church. Is it not he who also gives the reality? What a fund of praise, what a source of joy is here, that he first bestows his gifts upon

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¹ Ver. 2.

us, and then commends us for these very gifts? And shall his church, shall any member of his church imitate the slothful fool in the parable*, and call him ‘an hard man, that reaps where he hath not sown, and gathers where he hath not strawed?’ There is an addition here to the *dove’s eyes* which has some obscurity in it—*thou hast dove’s eyes*, מבעד לצמח, *mebod letzamtek*, which occurs in two other places², in both which we read it as here, *within thy locks*, the LXX. εκτος της σιωπης σου, ‘without thy silence,’ Arias Montanus, *intra comam tuam*, ‘within thy hair,’ Jerom and the Vulgate, *absque eo quod intrinsecus latet*, ‘from or without, that which is hid within;’ and other expositors, ‘now that thy veil is removed,’—all differing from one another, and rather confounding than instructing the reader. What is the real meaning, therefore, of this addition, I will not take upon me to determine, though I am far from supposing it not material. The noun צמח, *tzmt*, by its construction, looks to have affinity with, and even to be derived from, the verb צם, *tzum*, (which in many of its deflexions loses the middle radical, and in all of them signifies) ‘to fast;’ so the sense may be, ‘thy eyes are dove’s eyes,’ (see above, ch. i. 15.) for simplicity or constancy, because of, or through thy fasting, temperance, or self-denial. Again, in the other passages where it occurs, (to discuss this phrase

* St Matth. xxv. 24.

² Ver. 3. of this chapter, and ch. vi. 7.

phrase at once), 'thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks.' The Hebrew for temples is **רִיק**, *raqth*, from **רִק**, *raq*, empty or lank; and so called, say the dictionaries, from the make of that part of the head. This perhaps might be adjusted to the simile of a piece of a pomegranate, if we distinctly knew what all the qualities of the scripture **רִיק**, *remun*, which we call pomegranate, were. If it be splendid, shining and beautiful, as the current use of it seems to indicate, this needs not hinder the comparison; and the description in all the three places will run—*thy eyes, like the dove's, are constant and fixt, and thy temples are beautiful, like pieces of pomegranate, because of thy fasting, thy abstinence from every hurtful gratification.*

Thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Mount Gilead.—Here is another dark metaphor, in the literal sense; and the posture of 'goats hanging, when they brouze, on the sides of a mountain,' is, one should think, a strange resemblance 'of a fine woman's hair hanging carelessly down in jetty curls.' The word for *appear* occurs no where but here, and in the 6th 'chapter', so cannot have its sense determined. Only, from its position in both places, it expresses some relation that goats have, or may have, to a mountain. But why is Mount Gilead singled out? Were there no more mountains known to Solomon; that had goats brouzing on them? or is there

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a particular reason for this selection? I should think there were. Mount Gilead was a famous place, both from its name, and its product. The so much celebrated balm grew there; which made the prophet Jeremiah ask with surprise, ‘Is there ‘no balm in Gilead,’ no physician there’? And again, says he, ‘Go up to Gilead, and take balm’¹. As far back as Joseph’s time, Gilead was the staple of the balm trade²; and, to this day, ‘balm of ‘Gilead’ is proverbial. The very name of it too is significant, as the history tells us³; and גל עד, *gal od*, Heb. βουνος μαρτυς, LXX. is the heap-witness. The word עד, *od*, is *testimony*, a term of great note in the Mosaic institution, and much used by the prophets. But what connexion is there, in this light, between *goats* and *Gilead*? I have already hinted⁴, that goats, as distinguished from sheep, may be emblematical of the Gentile aliens⁵, and so may be described, as ‘flocking to, hanging upon, ‘appearing about the *gilead*,’ the testimony, oracle, or appointed institution, for its medicinal, cordial, cleansing balm; hence may be said to resemble the hair, the externals of the head, not as implying beauty or ornament, (to which the word used here שור, *shor*, in no acceptation of it has the least tendency), but as sticking to the head, as it were, and deriving nourishment from it. This word *shor*

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¹ Chap. viii. 22.² Chap. xlv. 11.³ Gen. xxxvii. 25.⁴ Gen. xxxi. 47.⁵ On ch. i. 8.⁶ Ephes. ii. 12.

is likewise 'a gate'; and, in application to the church, gives a comprehensive idea of (the goats, which *shor* sometimes metaphorically stands for) the *Gentiles coming in*. So extensive are the allusions of this divine speaker, both for description and prophecy, and so highly instructive in the spiritual design, but so uncouth, and after all the possibility of foreign aid, so unintelligible in the way of literal accommodation.

VER. 2.—*Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which come up from the washing, whereof every one bare twins, and none is barren among them.*

This is one of the many similes in the Song that is much extolled for its beauty of thought and propriety of application: But to this the translations have greatly contributed. We have the same simile repeated in the 6th chapter, with the addition of *sheep* in the original, which is not in this place, but may be justified by the other passage. The grammatical construction of the latter clause, adopted sometimes even upon the pastoral plan, gives the true meaning, *they come up from the washing two and two as twins, none has lost his fellow*, which is both juster and more striking than what we read about *bearing twins*, and *barrenness*. And here I might take notice of the quick and immediate transition from
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¹ See Psalm ix. 15. xxiv. 7. 9. cxviii. 19. 20. cxxii. 2, &c.

the goats in the former verse, to the sheep in this ; the goats there exemplified by the hair, the externals, circumstantials, things merely additional ; the sheep here, by the teeth, internals, necessary, constituent parts, members, as it were, of the head. Yet how to adjust this description to the church, or to what beauty about the church the fair one's teeth can be thought to have relation, is the question. Allusion to the teeth we know is often used emblematically in scripture in a bad sense¹. And, on the other hand, there is a blessing promised to Judah, (the praised among his brethren), in terms similar to what is before us², that his 'teeth should be white with milk.' We know too that the teeth are the grinders, the first preparers of food for the body, by their immediate connexion with, and concurring strength of, the head ; and are likewise useful, and even necessary instruments for the graceful modulation of the voice. What if all this shall be thought relative to these members of the *mystical* body, whose office it is to grind and prepare her food, the spiritual food of the word, and at the same time, to manage, and contribute to, the decent, distinct, orderly regulation of her voice, the voice of praise, thanksgiving, confession, and prayer to her BELOVED³. To the apostles, for instance, those first propagators of the gospel, standing in a particular relation to what we call the christian church,

¹ Psalm iii. 7. lvii. 4. lviii. 6. Prov. xxx. 14, &c.

² Gen. xlix. 12.

³ See above, ch. ii. 14.

church, I think this comparison of *teeth* may not improperly be referred. For it is worth the remarking, that there is something in the Hebrew word for *teeth*, which belongs to, and is expressive of the parallel here drawn: It is שני, *shani*, which likewise signifies *two*. And experience tells us, that, in the human species, the teeth generally cut the gum in pairs, are placed in two rows, and each has its corresponding fellow. It has long been observed, that St Matthew, in his catalogue of the twelve apostles¹, numbers them by pairs. And more particularly, we read², that the Lord appointed seventy others, and ‘sent them out, *αὐτὰς δύο, two and two.*’ Is there not something of affinity in this, and for ought we know intentionally, to both the nature, and Hebrew etymon, of teeth; especially in the allusion that follows, so descriptive of their regularity, harmony, and mutual assistance to one another, in performing their designed function? There is in this verse a part of description which is not in the parallel place³, *a flock—that are even shorn*, קטזב, *quetzubuth*, a very rare word, which occurs only in other four places⁴, in none of which has it the most distant connexion with ‘sheep-shearing.’ The only word for actual shearing of sheep is גז, *gazaz*, which has not the smallest affinity with this word *quetzeb*. The idea affixed to this root by the dic-

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¹ Ch. x. 2.² St Luke x. i.³ Chap. vi. 6.⁴ 1 Kings vi. 25. vii. 37. 2 Kings vi. 6. Jonah ii. 7.

tionaries is 'cutting, size, precision;' and, upon the word here in the Song, Marius de Calasio explains it to mean, 'ovium purificatarum præ aliis ovibus cum præcisione—sheep purified above other sheep with precision.' So it may very well be applied to the apostles, as 'precisely' significant of both their call and office. The mention of washing too, on this occasion, cannot fail to excite a most pleasing reflexion in the mind of the christian, looking back to that blessed laver in which he has been washed from his sins. 'Come up, *ἄν,* 'olu, ascended, *αναβαινσαι*', from the washing,' *απο το λαιρον*, LXX. a lavacro, Latin, exactly corresponding to the apostle's language¹, *δια λαιρον*, per lavacrum, 'the washing or laver of regeneration.' Accordingly our Saviour tells his apostles², 'Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken unto you;' and before that, more circumstantially, in explication, as it were, of the case in hand³, when with his own hands he washed their feet, and then said unto them, 'Ye are clean, but not all:' an exception which, we find from the history, had its peculiar reasons, and was soon after rectified⁴, when Matthias was 'numbered with the eleven apostles,' to fill up the room of the traitor Judas, that so none of that sacred choir might be 'without his fellow.' This act of washing the apostles seems to have been typified under the old in-

¹ See St Matth. iii. 16.

² Titus iii. 5.

³ St John xv. 3.

⁴ St John xiii. 5—12.

⁵ Acts i. 15—26.

institution, by the order given to the priest, when by any accident unclean', that he first 'wash his flesh with water, and be clean, and afterwards 'eat of the holy things, because it is his food.' There is something here clearly analogous to the description before us, which bids fair to justify the general application of it to the priests of the gospel, as well as to those of the law; and in some of its parts may be extended, as I have observed in other instances, to the people also, who we know have holy food to eat of, and to which they should 'draw near in full assurance of faith, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed with pure water'.

VER. 3.—*Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely; thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks.*

Here we shall be told, what a fine natural picture of beauty this is, and how descriptive of a lovely complexion. That it is natural I acknowledge, and must also observe, that it is the only stroke in the whole picture that is so. Does not this call for a deeper enquiry into the sense of it, and justify our endeavours to make it agreeable to the other parts of the description, which are not of such obvious meaning. *Thy lips.*—The root is שָׁפֵה, *shaphe*, which is always 'lip,' real or metaphorical; and

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¹ Levit. xxii. 7.

² Heb. x. 22.

when applied to mankind, is of larger extent than 'language,' and implies 'confession or declaration in a religious sense.' The first time we meet with it is in Genesis¹, 'The whole earth was of one language,' (lip, in Hebrew, and in all the old translations), as intending something more than what is commonly meant by 'language;' for it immediately follows, 'and of one speech;' which would be such a needless tautology, as, however common with us, the sacred writers never use. It was this *shaphe*, lip, that Jehovah confounded², not their language, as we read and understand it, but their confession, unity in, and expression of, religious sentiment, or what we would call their *Creed*. Not that it excludes the idea of language altogether, but takes in something more, as appears from the many places where it is joined with 'tongue³.' 'The priest's lips,' says Malachi⁴, 'shall preserve knowledge.' 'We will render the calves (LXX. καρπον, fruit)⁵ of our lips,' quoted from the LXX. by the apostle⁶, 'Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually,' that is, 'the fruit of our lips;' explained by what follows, 'our lips giving thanks (in Greek, as on the margin, 'confessing') to his name.' There is likewise a striking similarity between our poet's style here, and the historian's in Genesis.

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¹ Chap. xi. 1.² Ver. 7. 9.³ Psalm xii. 3. 4. xxxiv. 13. Ezek. xxxvi. 3. on the margin, &c.⁴ Chap. ii. 7.⁵ See Isaiah lvii. 19.⁶ Heb. xiii. 15.

‘The earth,’ says Moses, was of one lip, and of one
 ‘(דברים, *dabrim*), speech:’ So says Solomon, *thy*
lips—and thy (מדבר, *medabr*), *speech*, &c. The words
 being the same, the meaning cannot be different.
 Let us therefore see how all this will quadrate with
 the beautiful simile of the church’s lips being like a
thread of scarlet. And here we must go back to
 historical fact, for something to begin with.

In the book of Joshua¹, we read of a *thread of*
scarlet, (חשני השני, *hutheshani*, Heb. σπῆρμα ῥοκκαίνον, LXX.
 our very words, totidem literis, in both), which was
 of great service at a most important juncture. The
 men that were sent from the camp of Israel, to spy
 out the land, had taken refuge from their pursuers
 in Rahab’s house; and on her applying to them
 for a suitable return to her kindness, they bid her
 hang out a line of *scarlet thread* from her window,
 as the history fully tells us. This heathenish wo-
 man had a faith in Jehovah, the God of Israel,
 from having heard² what he had done for his peo-
 ple; and with her lips confessed before the men³,
 that ‘Jehovah their God, was God in heaven a-
 ‘bove, and in earth beneath;’ thus rendering
 the fruit of her lips to the TRUE GOD. In this
 faith, she begs for herself and family to be saved
 from the destruction which she knew to be impend-
 ing

¹ Chap. ii.

² Compare Isaiah liii. 1. Rom. x. 17.

³ Ver. 11.

ing upon her people, and ' asks of them ' a true ' token (*אמת אמת*, *auth amth*, a true, certain, confidential sign) for her security.' In answer to this, they order her ' to bind this line of scarlet thread ' in the window,' as a mark to let them know the house when they returned, and a pledge of deliverance and protection to all that should be in the house with her: Not a, or any line, but this (*אמתוהוה*, *ath tequuth huth eshanieze*, Heb. with both the demonstrative particles *ath* and *eze*, LXX. *το σπινθηρ σπινθηρ*), ' this very individual line,' probably what they themselves had by secret impulse brought with them for some such purpose, and now gave to the woman for her dependance, and for their own better distinguishing it, when they should see it again. Be in this what may, it was a *thread of scarlet* that was the means of salvation to Rahab, and was the happy consequence of the orthodox confession she had made with her *lips*, in exact conformity to the apostle's doctrine*. Does not this point out to us an emblematical, at least something more than natural, connexion between the two branches of our present comparison; and may we not rationally conclude, that our inspired bard had this wonderful affair of Rahab in his eye, when he drew this resemblance? A worthy father of the church, old Irenæus of Lyons, would appear to have had some high idea of this matter. When speak-

* Yer. 12,

* Rom. x. 10,

speaking of Rahab¹, he says, 'that she was saved
 'with all her house, (fide signi coccini), by the
 'faith of the scarlet sign;' and applies to her what
 our Saviour said of the Pharisees, who (signum
 coccinum nullificant) made no account of the scar-
 let sign, that 'the publicans and harlots went into
 'the kingdom of God before them².' This same
 venerable writer seems to have seen something
 more than ordinary about what he calls the 'sig-
 'num coccinum,' the scarlet sign: For, in an af-
 fair prior to this³, about the twins in Thamar's
 womb, he thus descants⁴: 'The scripture clearly
 'manifesting the people who had the scarlet sign,
 'that is, the faith of the uncircumcision, which was
 'first foreshewn in the patriarchs, but was after-
 'wards withdrawn that his brother might be born;
 'and then came he, who first put out his hand, but
 'was the second born, and was known by the scar-
 'let sign upon him, which is the passion of the
 'Just one⁵, from the beginning prefigured in Abel⁶,
 'described by the prophets⁷, and in these last times,
 'perfected in the Son of God.' I hope it will nei-
 ther be thought a digression from, nor injury done
 to, our subject, to quote such a respectable autho-
 rity for strengthening any explication I may offer of

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¹ Page 270. of the Paris Edition in 1563, or Book iv. ch. 37.

² St Matth. xxi. 31.

³ As recorded Gen. xxxviii. 28, 29, 30.

⁴ Book iv. chap. 42.

⁵ Acts iii. 14. vii. 52. xxii. 14.

⁶ St Matth. xxiii. 35.

⁷ Isaiah liii. 11, &c.

a passage, where a superficial view may perceive little mystery, but where 'that most curious examiner of all doctrines,' (as Tertullian, contra Valentinianos, calls him), found a great deal'. Indeed

† By the bye, this business between Rahab and the spies, may be what the apostle alluded to in his Epistle to the Hebrews, (though our marginal notes refer it to Abraham and to Lot, Genesis 18th and 19th chapters), where he says, chap. xiii. 2. 'Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares;' which is neither true with respect to Abraham, and is but uncertain as to Lot; nor does it carry much argument, and at the same time is but a defective rendering of the words, which are *δια ταυτης γαρ ελαθεν τιςς ξενωντας αγγελους*, quidam latuerunt (placuerunt, Jerom) hospitio excipientes angelos; literally, 'some have been hid (have pleased) having lodged 'angels,' the very word which St James, ii. 25. applies to Rahab's receiving, lodging, the angels, *αγγελους*, which we there read 'messengers.' But further, the whole of this history of Rahab, Joshua ii. and vi. 22—25, taken along with Abraham's behaviour to his son, Gen. xxi. and both these transactions fully considered, in all their circumstances and consequences, would be of great service towards that strange-sounding proposal of reconciling, as it is called, the two apostles, St Paul and St James, in their seemingly different accounts of justification, by *faith*, or by *works*. For what are the works to which St James, by his two instances, attributes justification? Not the works of any law, either natural or Mosaic, to which his two examples have no relation, nor any work of virtue or morality, to which, in the common acceptance of these two big words, they are both entirely opposite, the one of them to the instinctive ties of parental affection, and the other to the so much magnified virtue of the love of our country: But *works*, out of the usual line indeed of philosophic recommendation, or character of natural goodness, but such as flowed from, or were founded upon, a full assurance of faith, a faith arising in the heart from outward and antecedent revelations, and manifested in conformable acts of outward obedience to these revelations so made. A due attention to these particularities would explain the one apostle's *faith*, and the other's *works*, and would let us see that St Paul does not mean

deed he found only what the comparison of the church's *lips to a thread of scarlet* must lead every inquirer, upon the apostolic warrant², to discover; that, as Rahab was saved by a scarlet thread, as Noah was by the ark³, and was brought into the church to be a progenitrix of both the typical and real Solomon⁴; so the church's confession of her faith, (whether collectively as a body, or diffusively in her members), which is in scripture always assigned to the *lips* as their function, is to her *the thread of scarlet*, in retrospect to what it once produced, and in allusion to the gracious promise⁴, 'though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' Red, to denote the requisition of blood for the remission of them: White, to indicate the purity superinduced in their stead.

Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely.—*Comely*, one should think, in our idea, is not a quite proper epithet for speech. The Hebrew, נָאֻם, *naue*, signifies desirable, decent, or becoming, descriptive of what speech the church *should* use. As one wrote to a friend who had praised him, 'that he took his praises to be not so

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mean the imaginary faith of the Antinomians, either ancient or modern; nor St James, the splendid works of even a Socratic morality; but that they both build justification upon the same bottom, though with different views, and under different terms, in their way of argumentation.

² 1 Cor. x. 11.³ St Matth. i. 5.⁴ Heb. xi. 7.⁴ Isaiah i. 18.

‘much applicable to what he was, as directive of ‘what he ought to be,’ so should the church take all her Beloved’s commendations of her in the same light, as instructive rules; and this one in particular, to have her speech, her declarations, confessions, that is, her worship, the *fruit of her lips*, such as may be desirable, grateful, agreeable to him; which it cannot be, if it tend in the least to degrade or dishonour him. Her individual members too should all bring the observation home to themselves, in obedience to the apostle’s injunction, ‘to ‘use no foolish talking or jesting, which are not ‘convenient (*οὐκ ἀνήκοντα*, not becoming, agreeable to ‘character), but rather giving of thanks’—‘and ‘what is good to the use of edifying, that it may ‘minister grace to the hearers*.’ *Thy speech is comely.*—The conclusion of this verse has already been noticed, and such an explanation given of it, as seems most agreeable to the general plan and purpose of our Song.

VER. 4.—*Thy neck is like the tower of David, built for an armoury, whereon hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.*

It will not be said of this, as of the preceding verse, that it is entirely conformable to nature, and of easy interpretation. We have seen the *neck* already spoken of¹, as decorated with something; and

¹ Ephes. v. iv.

² Chap. iv. 29.

³ Chap. i. 10.

and the neck is much used in scripture, to denote yielding or obedience, and the contrary'. *Like the tower of David*, מגדל דוד, *migdal Duid*, the greatness or magnificence of the beloved. We read of this *tower of David* nowhere else, but in this mystical Song, and the mention of David the beloved points at something beyond bare historical resemblance. *Built an armoury*, לתלפיות, *lethalpiuth*. This is another ἀπαξ λεγόμενον, used but once, and is variously rendered. [The LXX. give it in Greek characters, εἰς θάλαπινωθ, Arias Montanus has it, in celsa acumina, 'into high points,' Jerom, cum propugnaculis, 'with bulwarks,' and the Vulgate, ad docendum transeuntes, 'to teach them that go by.' Some of the Rabbins interpret it by a just enough analysis, ad suspendendas acies gladiatorum, 'to hang 'up swords:' From which, and from the specification that follows, it would seem our translators had been induced to render it armoury, tho' in the three other places where we read of armoury*, the original has entirely different words. The Talmud presents us with an equally grammatical derivation of this compound word, תל פיות, *thal piuth*, tumulus orum, 'the heap of mouths,' the place, as it were, 'towards which all mouths pray,' in allusion to Solomon's request, 'when thy people

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' pray

[†] See Prov. xxix. 1. Jerem. vii. 26. and ch. xxvii. Hosea x. 11. Acts vii. 51, &c.

² Isaiah xxii. 8. Jerem. l. 25. Nehem. iii. 19.

'pray toward the city—and the house'; &c. From these several significations, all more or less founded in the radical construction of the word, it may be presumed at least, that it is a word of our bard's composition, for the purpose of present description; and in application to the fair one's neck, (the juncture of, and channel of communication from, the head to the body), may be something of the same purport with the *haruzim*, 'chains,' which he had applied in that way before. The mention of *bucklers* and *shields*, as I already hinted, may lead to the idea of armour; and the christian who remembers the elegant inventory that the apostle gives of the *panoplia*, 'the whole armour of God'; can be at no loss for the spiritual intendment of these metaphorical terms. It deserves particular notice, that the word for *bucklers*, מגן, *megan*, is seldom used in a real sense, but most frequently in a figurative one, and is predicated of Jehovah under the idea of protection or defence, as the least acquaintance with the Psalms, and other devotional parts of the sacred code, will readily discover. The addition too of the word for *thousand* may have a special meaning. It is אלף, *aleph*, (the name of the first letter in the Hebrew alphabet), and besides the signification of *thousand*, which seems to be metaphorical, is often to be met with in the sense of teaching, directing, or leading: In which sense, Marius

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* 1 Kings viii. 44.

† Ephes. vi. 13—17. See also Rom, xiii. 12. 2 Cor. vi. 7, &c.

de Calasio refers the above word, *thalpiuth*,¹ to this root, and renders it, *documenta in turribus*, 'documents in or by towers, because high towers shew travellers the way.' So the *aleph emegan* here (*thousand bucklers*) may radically, and by grammar, signify 'leading protection,' or, the leader the protector', and may point to that *Dux* or Captain, whose protection is equal to, yea better than *a thousand bucklers*. In any case, the spiritual sense will be, that the church's armour, the 'weapons of her warfare', are laid up in, and to be drawn out of, the repository of the Beloved, which he has built for his soldiers, his גִּבּוּרִים, *geburim*, *du-vero*, mighty made champions, to have recourse to, and derive supply from. How to adjust the two branches of this magnificent comparison will be no great difficulty, when it is remembered that such comparisons, in sacred pœsy especially, neither require nor observe the nicest exactness, and when we consider, what I have shewn already, how frequently that part of the body, *the neck*, is used in scripture, to express obedience or disobedience to the divine yoke of precepts, ordinances, and instructions, with which the church is blessed, and which she is so fervently called upon to comply with and submit to. 'Take my yoke upon you,'² affords sufficient light, though conveyed in me-

¹ תַּלְפִּיּוּת, singular, *emegan*, with the demonstrative prefix ה, *he, she, ille*.

² 2 Corin. x. 4.

³ St Matth. xi. 29.

metaphor, to illustrate the simile here, and teaches us how the church's neck, with this 'easy yoke' upon it, and ornamented with the 'chains' of her Beloved's free gift', may be thought to resemble the *tower of David* in all the parts of this military description.

VER. 5—*Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies.*

The most of these words I have had occasion to speak of already. There is something similar to the comparison here, in another of this poet's compositions*, 'The wife of thy youth, as the loving hind and pleasant roe, let her breasts satisfy thee at all times:' So our translation runs. The original, I know, is different from this place of the Canticles: But our translators, following most of the old versions, have seen the same idea in both, which it could be made appear the writer has had in his mind. There are many confessedly mystical allusions in the Book of the Proverbs, notwithstanding the simplicity of its title, and the prevailing notion of restricting it to a moral view: And the great beauty of the few of Solomon's writings that are extant, is the double aspect that they bear, the moral and the mystical, like the shell and the kernel, both which have their use, though the one more valuable than the other.

The

* Chap. i. 10.

‡ Prov. v. 19.

The 'Wife' in the Proverbs, and the 'Fair One' in the Song, point both to the same object, though in different attitudes; and the resemblance of the 'breasts' in both to the same creature, under different names of important signification, cannot but convey the same meaning. In the Song here, the *roes*, to which the breasts are likened, are called עֶפְרִים תְּאֻמֵּי צִבְיָה, *ophrim taumi tzebie*, 'twin dusts' of the turgid, swelling creature.' This is a peculiarity in the Song; and from the five places in it where the word *ophr* (which every where else signifies *dust*) occurs in the construction before us, the Lexicons have made a separate sense of it to be the 'young of deer or goats,' but upon what authority they have not told us. Whatever they be, they are here said to be תְּאֻמֵּי, *taumi*, 'twins;' which, in the few places where we meet with it, is not only applied to the product of animals, but likewise to the 'boards of the tabernacle,' which were ordered to be 'coupled together,' (marg. twinned¹); and in a typical light, as displaying the junction of that sacred frame, may very fitly be brought in here, as the instituted band of union and connexion in the spiritual fabric.

Which feed among the lilies.—Under the interpretation I have already offered of the church's breasts, this favourite phrase may here with propriety enough belong to them, in an active sense, as the
feeders

¹ Exod. xxvi. 24. xxxvi. 29.

feeders or nourishers among the lilies, the delights or rejoicings which that nourishment produceth.

VER. 6.—*Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.*

VER. 7.—*Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee.*

The introduction here is the same as that in the 17th verse of the 2d chapter; and then the Beloved goes on thus: *I will get me* (אני אהבתי, *alk li*, I will go, 'for myself,' for my own purpose, or of my own motion), *to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.*—What these signify, may be learned from the Evangelical history¹ of the myrrh and frankincense actually presented to him, to introduce the so much expected day of his manifestation². It has been observed, that the oblation of frankincense, which was such a customary, if not necessary, ingredient in *sacrificial* acts, had a view to his Deity, and the myrrh, being used in embalmments, to his humanity³. And the introducing them here cannot fail to bring into our minds the idea of his incarnation, either as then predicted, or now accomplished, though thus wrapt up under a cloud of enigmatical representation.

Thou

¹ St Matth. ii. 11.

² 1 Tim. iii. 16.

³ St John xix. 39.

Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee.— Little explication is necessary here, and the application is obvious. *No spot*, מום אין, *ain mum*, in thee. There is a text somewhat to this purpose in the mysterious song of Moses¹, ‘their spot (מום, *mumem*) is not (the spot of) his children,’ which has a strange sound, and seems to be neither proper nor literal. The marginal rendering is better and more just, ‘that they are not his children is their ‘blot.’ The Lord’s children ought to have no spot, no *mum*, in the bad sense of that word. It was an essential and indispensable requisite in every offering to Jehovah, that it should be without spot. The great, the archetypal offering is described² to be ‘a lamb without spot—אמאמוט,’ very like *ain mum*, here used³. It is the consummating ornament of the church, and that alone which can entitle her to the extensive character of being *all fair*, that she be ‘אגיה ואי אמאמוט,’ ‘holy and without ‘spot.’ And whence is this ornament to be had? From the Beloved himself, who ‘sanctifies and ‘cleanses her with the washing of water by the ‘word, and thereby presents her to himself, a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle.’ *Thou art all fair, my love*, &c.

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VER.

¹ Recorded Deut. xxxii. 5.² 1 Peter i. 19.³ See also Heb. ix. 14.⁴ Ephes. v. 27.

VER. 8.—*Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon ; look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.*

Hitherto we have had a stately picture, in strokes of what may be called personal delineation. What follows is to the same purpose, but expressed in terms of characteristic or official description. *My spouse.*—This is the first time we meet with this high title in the Divine Song of loves. The word is כֵּלֶה, *kele*, from כֵּל, *kel*, which always signifies ‘perfection, consummation, completion, omnis, totus, ‘all.’ So *kele*, feminine, (*spouse, without my*), is a perfect, complete, entire one. And here let me again observe, in respect to the language of this URANIA, heavenly muse, the beautiful turn or transition from the last verse to this. He had just been saying, *thou art all fair*, כֵּלְךָ, *kelke*, ‘all thou, ‘thine all, or the all and whole of thee,’ as an introduction to the new, the finishing appellation under the same idea, of spouse or bride, the highest stage of honour and appropriation, to which the church can be exalted, and the happy privilege with which scripture so frequently clothes her¹. *Come with me from Lebanon*, the hill of Lebun, *frankincense*², *With me* is not necessary, the word אֹתִי, *athi*, does not require

¹ See Isaiah lxi. 10. lxii. 5. Jerem. ii. 2, &c. and compare St Matth. ix. 15. St John iii. 29. Rev. xix. 7. xxi. 2. 9. xxii. 17, &c.

² Ver. 6.

require it. It may be from אָתָּה, *athe*, to come; and the LXX. have rendered it *deugo*, come along, come hither, *to me*, (by way of call), from the incense-mountain, or with incense, the sweet-smelling incense of prayer¹. *Come from Lebanon,—look* (תִּשְׁחֹרֶה, *teshuri*, which may likewise signify ‘sing’) *from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, &c.*—Geographers are at great pains to describe the local situation of these mountains, where they are, and how they stand to Jerusalem and to one another. All which may be just enough, but gives no assistance in finding out the spiritual application of them to the purpose of this call from the beloved. It is acknowledged, that in the Bible language, (which, whether the first language or not, can be proved to be the oldest now in use, and the mother of many of them), the names of persons and places are significant, and have a certain meaning; which is a striking feature in that language, and has indeed been in some measure copied by others, though not in the same way, nor with the same propriety that the Hebrew writers have had the advantage of in their poetic compositions, as will appear from examining the passage before us. *From the top of Amana*—no matter whether in Syria or Cilicia, our word is אִמְנָה, *amne*, from the root אָמַן, *amn*, (whence the well-known word retained in all European languages, *amen*²), implying ‘faith,

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‘trust,

¹ Psalm cxli. 2.

² See Rev. iii. 14. and compare Isaiah lxxv. 16.

‘trust, certain assurance;’ and so the LXX. have rendered it, ἀπο αρχης πισεως, ‘from the head, beginning, or principle of faith’. If then the verb *teshuri*, which is immediately connected with the *top of Amana*, shall be interpreted ‘sing,’ as I think it may, the invitation will be ‘to sing the song of ‘faith, the new song’, the song which the church ‘sings to her Beloved’.’ *From the top of Shenir and Hermon.*—These two names are for the same place. So says Moses †, ‘which Hermon, the Sidonians ‘call Sirion, and the Amorites call it Shenir.’ *Shenir* is seldom mentioned, except here and in two other places ‡. But *Hermon* is frequent, and famous both in historical and allusive narration. It comes by derivation from חרם, *hherm*, to devote, consecrate, or make sacred to God, by way of anathema, so to be cut off or destroyed as an accursed thing. Yet there are two places where Hermon seems to be well spoken of.—‘Tabor’ (where it is thought our Saviour was transfigured) ‘and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name:’ and §, ‘as the ‘dew of Hermon which fell upon the hill of Zion.’ So חרם, *hermon*, as sacred or devoted to God, may, like the Latin *sacer*, be taken in a good or bad sense, as the context requires. If in a good sense, the

† See Heb. xii. 2. ἀρχη ἀρχη, author of faith.

‡ Psalm xl. 3. xcvi. 1. cxliv. 9.

§ 1 Isaiah v. 1. explained Rev. v. 9.

4 Deut. iii. 9.

§ 1 Chron. v. 23. and Ezek. xxvii. 5.

6 Psalm lxxxix. 12.

7 Psalm cxxxiii. 3.

the 'looking or singing' here may mean 'from, or 'out of, a spirit of devotion, a spirit devoted, or 'made holy to the Lord.' If in the sense of accursed, or devoted to destruction, then acknowledging her own natural demerits, and fleeing to her Beloved for deliverance, in imitation of the Psalmist's resolution¹, when his soul was vexed within him, when one deep called to another, and waves and storms were going over him, 'therefore will I 'remember (commemorate) thee from the Hermonites and the hill Mizor;' or, as the Prayer-Book has it, 'from the little hill of Hermon.'

This will no doubt be found to agree best with what follows—*from the lions' dens, from the mountains of leopards.* It is needless to enquire where these dens and mountains were, real or not; they must be here taken in a mystical sense, and that sense is obvious. Lions and leopards are terrible animals, and, in scripture-language, standing emblems of dread and danger. It is well known that the lion is the boldest of all the beasts of prey, and makes his attacks with a violence and courage peculiar to his nature. And though in sacred hieroglyphics, the face of the lion has the emblematical honour of a place in the compound cherubic figure, and that too in a particular position, as joined to the face of the man²; yet out of that august station, he is always

¹ Psalm xlii. 8. 9.

² Ezek. i. 10. whence the 'Lion of the tribe of Judah,' Rev. v. 5.

ways drawn in most frightful and dismaying colours. We are told by naturalists, among other peculiarities of the leopard, that he emits such an attractive smell, as allures other creatures within the reach of his devouring clutches. The word for leopard is נִמְר, *nimr*, which has its composition, מֵר, *mr*, frequently used for מִר, *mur*, myrrh, said to possess a strong aromatic flavour, and is a standing ingredient in sacred mixtures: may we not then suppose an allusion between the mountain of מֵר, *mr*, myrrh (in the 6th) and the mountains of נִמְרִים, *nimrim*, leopards, in this verse, (See Isaiah xv. 6. Jerem. xlviii. 34. 'waters of *nimrim*,') stating the smelling quality of the gum, for sacred purpose, over against the same in the beast for a destructive one. The Hebrew language is capable of, and delights in, such allusive turns¹; so the addition here may import a comfortable call to the church, the spouse, neither to be afraid of the hostile assaults of open fierce devourers, the lions², nor allured by the bewitching savour of destructive pleasures, the leopards, but to *look* to her Beloved for protection against the one³, and deliverance from the other⁴. However, as the emblem of the lion is too familiar to need much explication, there is a scripture character of the leopard equally instructive and

¹ See, *inter alia*, Isaiah v. 7.—Judgement and oppression, righteousness and cry—in the original.

² 1 Peter v. 8.

³ Psalm xxii. 21. Dan. vi.

⁴ 1 Cor. x. 13.

and pertinent to our subject¹. ‘Can the leopard ‘change his spots?’ which, when compared with what is said of the Fair One, ‘there is no spot in ‘thee,’ affords a direction to retire from, and keep out of, all such spotted company, such as are spots and blemishes², ‘spots in our christian meetings³,’ thus to have no unnecessary communication with these leopards, whether spotted with heresy or immorality in faith or practice, but to shun and avoid them as much as we can, and thereby ‘keep ourselves *unspotted* from the world⁴.’

VER. 9.—*Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.*

Here is another endearing appellation, and used for the first time, אַחְתִּי, *ahthi*, my sister, but after this frequently repeated, and I shall have occasion to consider it with due attention. *Thou hast ravished my heart*, לִבִּי, *lebabtani*, Heb. *καρδίωσας*, LXX. *abstulisti cor meum*, Arias Montanus, *vulnerasti cor meum*, Jerom; all marking a strong impression on the לֵב, *leb*, the heart, which our translation has elegantly and properly expressed by *ravishing*, and thereby painted the Beloved’s feelings in most delightful colours. But by what means is this strong, this delightful impression wrought?

¹ Jerem. xiii. 28.

² 2 St Peter ii. 13.

³ St Jude, 12.

⁴ St James i. 27.

wrought? From his own blessed mouth we have it, *with one of thine eyes*, one look from Amana, as in the sense above noticed, which our translators, probably referring to this place, have put upon the verb *teshuri*, 'look from the top of Amana.' 'Looking unto Jesus,' is apostolic precept¹, and the 'eye of faith' is so much recommended in scripture, and so proverbial almost in christian speech, that the devout soul can be at no loss to understand what the *eye looking from Amana* means, and cannot but admire the happy effect which it produces.² But this is not all. *With one chain of thy neck*.—What I have already offered on the fourth verse will facilitate the exposition of this, and point to the obedience belonging to, and represented by, the *neck*. So that the church's faith and obedience may be thought to be here described, as working such a happy effect on the Beloved's heart, and when thus conjoined, these are her most powerful, indeed her only recommendation to his love and affection. I could enlarge upon this extensive theme, but shall dismiss it with a single reflexion, that, if *one eye* and *one chain* be attended with such a happy consequence, what must be the consequence of the 'dove-like constancy of 'both the eyes', and uniform comeliness of the 'whole neck'?' What a noble encouragement to duty is it, when even our partial endeavours are so acceptable? Well might Jehovah claim the heart

¹ Heb. xii. 2.² Chap. i. 15.³ Ver. 10.

heart, as he does by the pen of our bard¹, ‘My son, give me thy heart;’ and that not only from sovereign or paternal authority, but even upon the footing of equity and gratitude, when by the same pen here, he declares his own heart to be so warmly affected, and wrought upon by our weak and imperfect expressions! Is not this dealing with us as rational beings, possessed indeed of dignified faculties, and, in prophetic style, literally ‘drawing us with cords of love, and bands of a man’²? Can the most philosophic reason wish for more?

VER. 10.—*How fair is my love, my sister, my spouse!
how much better is thy love than wine, and the smell
of thine ointments than all spices!*

A similar address occurs in the beginning of our Song; and though there coming from the mouth of the fair one, and here from the Beloved, the same explication will serve for both. The *wine and the ointments* are the Beloved’s free gift; and from that gratuitous donation, become the spouse’s property, exciting, augmenting, and adding value to her loves; (דודיק, *dudike*, thy loves, plural), her various displays of it in faith, obedience, dependance, gratitude, and rendering all acceptable to him from, or because of, the *merit*, not of her faint though sincere exertions, but of his own powerful and holy impressions.

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VER.

¹ Prov. xxiii. 26.² Hosea ix. 4.

VER. 11.—*Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under thy tongue, and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.*

We have seen what the *lips* mean, and what their functions are. They are here exhibited in a character somewhat different from the former description of them, but as from the same hand, so we may believe with the same view. Here they are said to *drop honeycomb*, (as is not in the original, and neither the LXX. Jerom, nor the Vulgate have it). The word metonymically rendered *honeycomb* is נַחֲלִית, *naphth*, from נָחַף, *nuph*, the root always used for what is called, in the Levitical dispensation, the *Wave-offering*, on which so much stress is laid¹. This *naphth*, in the sacred intendment of it, the *lips drop תִּתְּכַפְּנֶנּוּ tethaphne*, ('will drop, or let them 'drop'), from נָחַף, *neph*, drop or distil, which is frequently applied to speech². And so from the typical use of the *naph*, and the metaphorical application of the 'dropping,' the office assigned to the lips here, may be analogous to what is said of them³, as above, and the one text will explain and

con-

¹ Exod. xxix. 24. 27. Levit. x. 15. Numb. vi. 20, &c. and is applied, in the general sense of offering, to gold, Exod. xxxv. 22. xxxviii. 24. and to brass, xxxviii. 29.

² Job xxix. 22. 'my speech dropped upon them.' Ezek. xx. 46. xxi. 2. 'Set thy face and drop (thy word) towards, &c. Micah ii. 11. 'I will prophecy,' Heb. drop—'he shall even be the prophet,' Heb. dropper, &c.

³ Heb. xiii. 15.

confirm the other. *Honey and milk are under thy tongue*—לְשׁוֹנְךָ, *leshunke*, lingua tua, the organ that frames the words, and is often, as here, joined with, and in distinction from, the lips. The delectable nutritive qualities of honey and milk are well known, and 'flowing with milk and honey' is the current peculiar recommendation of the 'promised land.' The prophet Ezekiel makes an addition to this¹, 'the land that I had espied for them, (had given them, v. 15.) flowing with milk and 'honey, which is the glory of all lands:' Which, if predicated of the milk and honey, as our connection of the clause runs, and as perhaps is commonly understood, would enhance the value, both real and emblematical, of the milk and honey, by such a lofty epithet. Yet from the construction in the Hebrew, צְבִי הִיא, *tzebi eia*, ornamentum decor ipsa, there is more ground to attribute it to the land itself, the holy land, which is meant under this word *tzebi*, by Jeremiah², 'the *tzebi*, glory, beauty of 'the hosts of nations;' and by Daniel³, 'toward the 'pleasant land;' and⁴, 'the glorious land,' and⁵, 'the glorious holy mountain'; and which indeed might very justly be stiled the 'glory of all lands,' as it was long honoured with the residence of the בְּכֹר יְהוָה, *Chabod Jehovah*, the typical glory in the midst of it, and at last had the glory of having the

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real

¹ Chap. xx. 6.² Chap. iii. 19.³ Chap. viii. 9.⁴ Chap. xi. 16. 4r.⁵ Ver. 45.⁶ Compare Psalm xlviii. 2.

real glory, the King of Glory¹, the glory of Israel, born in it², and from thence dispersing the glory of his light to all lands³. However, as this land, so eminently typical of good things to other lands, is further characterised with the distinction of flowing with milk and honey, *ρευσαν γαλα και μελι*, LXX. 'flowing milk and honey,' actively as it were, we may conclude, that the milk and honey, the copious product of that glorious land, have also a typical meaning: And what that meaning is, as connected here with the tongue, we have scripture in figurative style pointing out to us⁴.

The smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.—It cannot escape the notice of the least attentive reader of scripture, how repeatedly, and in what strong terms, the act, (if we must not call it *sense*) of smelling, is attributed to Jehovah, and that too in as literal language as could be said of man. The very organ of this sense is given by the sacred writers to Jehovah, *אפי*, *aph*, *aphim*, nose, nostrils⁵, and in such strong terms of application, that we find the darling attribute in Deity, on which man's comfort is mainly built, his long-suffering, always expressed in conformity, as it were, to the common observation of physiognomists,

¹ Psalm xxvii. 10. Te Deum.

² St John i. 14.

³ St Luke ii. 29—32.

⁴ Psalm xix. 11. cxix. 103. Prov. xvi. 24. Isaiah lv. i. 1 St Peter ii. 2. 1 Cor. iii. 2. Heb. v. 12, &c.

⁵ Exod. xv. 8, 2 Sam. xxii. 9.

mists, by a compound word from this root, אַרְכ־אַפִּים, *ark-aphim*, longis naribus, 'long-nosed, slow to anger'. As early as the flood, we meet with accounts of Jehovah's smelling². 'Noah built an altar 'to Jehovah, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar, and Jehovah smelled a sweet savour,' (Heb. רִיחַ הַנְּחֹחַ, *rihh enihhe*, alluding to Noah's name, נֹחַ, *nahh*, rest, literally, 'a smell of rest'); 'and Jehovah said in his heart³,' &c. After this first mention of it, we find it so often occurring, either affirmatively or negatively, that it would be superfluous to quote all the passages⁴. The smell here in the Song is said to be like the *smell of Lebanon*. So says Hosea of Israel⁵, 'his beauty as the olive-tree; and his smell as Lebanon;' which, from the proper signification of Lebanon, is easily explained. But what principally concerns us at present, is to observe

¹ Exod. xxxiv. 6. Num. xiv. 18. Psal. lxxxvi. 15. ciii. 8. Joel ii. 13, &c.

² Gen. viii. 20. 21.

³ Here, by the bye, I would ask, Who could tell Moses what Jehovah said in his heart, but Jehovah himself? And is not this inspiration? So more than tradition, by which some would be calculating that Moses might have had all his knowledge of past things.

⁴ See, *inter alia*, Exod. xxix. 18. Levit. i. 9. iv. 31. vi. 15. Numb. xv. 3, &c. 'a sweet savour to Jehovah;' and negatively, Levit. xxvi. 31. 'I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours.' Amos v. 21. 'I will not smell in your assemblies.' Compare Isaiah i. 11. Jerem. vi. 20, &c. And in this typical acceptance it is applied by St Paul to the Passion of Christ—Ephes. v. 2. to the preaching of the gospel—2 Cor. ii. 15. to the offices of Christian charity—Philip. iv. 18. *οσμήν ευαγγελίου*, as the LXX. always render the Hebrew.

⁵ Chap. xiv. 6.

serve whence this smell proceeds, of which the Beloved thus speaks in such a high strain of commendation. *The smell of thy garments*—שֶׁלִמְחִיךָ, *shalmthika*, from שָׁלֵם, *shalm*, the word for *peace*, and the root of Solomon's name; probably because of, and in allusion to, that gracious act of Jehovah Aleim, the Lord God making coats of skins (whatever these were) to clothe the first offenders¹; and in that emblematical way restoring them to his *peace* and favour. This is the first time we find any thing done for man under the idea of cloathing or *garments*; and keeping in our minds the general sense of it, (whatever disputable interpretations it may bear), as an immediate act of divine goodness, would be of great use to us in many of our pious meditations; It would let us see the propriety of the advice², 'I counsel thee to buy of me—white raiment, (ἱματῖα, garments), that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.' And buying, we know, (especially in the prophet's style³, 'without money and without price,' which is all the buying we are capable of in this case), is always a sign of *peace* between the parties. It would give us a just idea of the wedding-garment in the parable⁴, about which so much has been said, and the want of which was so fatal: And it would discover to us the particular beauty

¹ Gen. iii. 21.

² Revel. iii. 18.

³ Isaiah lv. 1.

⁴ St Matth. xxii. 12.

THE SONG OF SOLOMON.
I found from this text, that

auty of that part of the prodigal son's reception ¹,
re the father, as the first testimony of his tak-
ck the poor penitent into his *peace*, says to the
'Bring forth the best robe, and put it on
σολην την πρωτην, the robe, the first one,
God's making, the robe of *peace*, *mercy*,
that man was first clothed and cover-
his shamefully naked state². We may
om all this, what the church's garments are,
whence to be had ; not of her own providing,
any more than the clothing of the first church
was; but prepared and bestowed by the same hand,
by him who was anointed³ to give the garment
of praise for the spirit of heaviness⁴, by him who
'clothes his church with the garments of salvation,
'and covers her with the robe (*χιτωνα*, LXX. coat)
'of righteousness⁵.' Of what righteousness? Not
her own; for that, by her own confession⁶, is but
'filthy rags;' neither sufficient for covering, nor of
agreeable odour, nor of decent appearance; but the
righteousness of him who is Jehovah our righteous-
ness⁷, who is made unto us—righteousness⁸, even
Jesus Christ the righteous⁹, the garments from his
wardrobe have a fragrant and delightful smell.

The smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.

How

¹ St Luke xv. 22.

² See Ezek. xvi. 1—13.

³ Isaiah lxi. See the application, St Luke iv. 18.

⁴ Ver. 3.

⁵ Ver. 10.

⁶ Isaiah lxiv. 6.

⁷ Jerem. xxiii. 6.

⁸ 1 Cor. i. 30.

⁹ 1 St John ii. 1.

How is this to be understood? Let Moses explain Solomon¹: 'Isaac smelled the smell of Jacob's raiment, and blessed him; and said, See the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which Jehovah hath blessed,' &c. This is a most important (may I be permitted to say, much mistaken) business; and moral philosophy has censured both Jacob and his mother for their conduct in it. But *a look from Amana*, an eye of faith, will perceive² a secret direction of divine counsel in the whole process of it; and Moses has given us a key to discover the direction which the mother was under, in what share she took in carrying it on³: 'Esau hated Jacob—and Esau said in his heart—and these words of Esau were told to Rebekah,' &c. I again ask, as above in the case of Noah, who could have told Rebekah this, but he who knows the secrets of all hearts? and who, we may therefore conclude, had put it into her heart to do all she had done in the matter. I could adduce other similar instances, where such apparently little insertions, like the fine lines of a picture that are often overlooked in our admiration of the capital strokes, will, upon a nearer survey, be found the discriminating features to point out the beauty, and ascertain the design of the whole piece.

However, as to our present concern in this mysterious

¹ Gen. xxii. 27.

² See Heb. xi. 20.

³ Ver. 41. 42.

terious transaction where Isaac smelled the smell of his son's raiment, let us examine it, in all the circumstantialia attending it, and we shall see how explicatory it is of the noble simile we have under consideration, and how instructive in many particulars worthy of our notice. The raiment upon Jacob, of which Isaac, the blessing, (one of the ancestors, and in this affair an eminent type, of him in whom all nations were to be blessed¹), was so well pleased with the smell, was not Jacob's own, but was borrowed of set purpose. Rebekah took 'goodly raiment,' (בגדי החמד, *bagdi ehhamdth*, την εὐαγενην τὴν καλὴν, LXX. 'the fair robe,' *vestes concupiscibiles*, 'garments of desire, the 'Desire, חמד, *hhamdath*, of 'all nations'²), 'goodly raiment of her eldest son 'Esau, and put them upon Jacob.' Esau was a first-born, entitled in that character of primogeniture, to singular privileges; and to this character we find his father Isaac, from natural impulse at first, paying particular regard. The garments therefore were Esau's, not his ordinary, or hunting dress, for he was abroad in that dress at the time, but what we might call his *sacerdotal*s, robes of dignity and office, and his mother had the keeping of them—'they were with her in the house'³. These old typical mothers had great prerogatives, and were much employed in many of the then solemnities of the divine œconomy. They often

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gave

¹ Gen. xxii. 18. Gal. iii. 8. 16.² Hag. ii. 7. compare Psalm xlv. 8.³ Ver. 15.

gave significant names to their sons, and assigned significant reasons for so doing. Hence the spiritual intendment of ‘ Honour thy father and thy mother,’ (not the least difference marked), and of Solomon’s direction still more particular, ‘ My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.’ It was the law (חֻק, *ture*, disposition, appointment) [of the mother here], ‘ Obey my voice, and go,’ that procured the blessing to Jacob, by her disposal (from divine impulse) of the garments to which it belonged. These robes of the first-born seem to have had certain marks of distinction, which Rebekah believed, as it turned out in the event, the father would perceive, and act accordingly. It was the raiment, therefore, or the son under the raiment, the raiment of the first-born³, that Isaac irreversibly blessed, from the smell, and that smell described by a most apposite and edifying parallel— ‘ the smell of a field that the Lord hath blessed ;’ not inherent in, or naturally belonging to, the field, but communicated to it, and impressed upon it, by the blessing of Jehovah. From all which joined together, and taken in the principal and effective view of the whole affair, we cannot miss, as individuals, to draw this useful, however much neglected, lesson, that unless we appear before our heavenly

¹ Prov. i. 8.

² Gen. xxvii. 13.

³ See Rom. viii. 29. Col. i. 15. Heb. i. 6. xii. 23. Exod. iv. 22. referred to by Hosea xi. 1. and applied by St Matth. ii. 15.

venly Father in the garments of our elder brother, described as above, and these garments put upon us by our spiritual mother, who has the keeping of them, we have no title to ask or expect our heavenly Father's blessing. Upon the whole, let us carry all these typical circumstances of this historical fact, into spiritual application, and it will appear how pertinent they are to the church, in every point of view, and what light they throw upon the Beloved's rapturous declaration here in the Song—*the smell of thy garments, like the smell of Lebanon,*

VER. 12.—*A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.*

A new run of similes here, and every one of them highly descriptive and proper. *A garden enclosed*, גַּן נִסְתָּר, *gan noul*, Heb. κηπος κεκλεισμενος, LXX. *hortus obseratus*, Latin. It is well known what a figure *garden*, both name and thing, makes in sacred history, and in heathen mimicry. In the sacred page indeed, almost coeval with creation, 'The Lord God planted a (*gan*) garden in Eden 'eastward.' Justly therefore may it be said of this original garden, as is said in another application', 'This was Jehovah's doing,' and (we may warrantably add) 'marvellous in the first eyes that beheld it.' We have from an inspired pen, an elegant, (though not fully understood) description

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of

of this marvellous and mystical inclosure, and of Adam's connexion with it, which we read¹ was 'to dress it and keep it,' but rather, as the words by grammar may, and every thing considered, must, in propriety bear, 'to serve (Jehovah) and ob-
'serve (his will) there,' *לעבדה ולשמרה*, *lobde ulesham-re*, servire et servare ibi, colere et studere in ea, 'to
'worship and study in it.' It is in vain now to look for the local situation of this delicious spot, whatever extent it might have had; as every attempt that way must fail, and can be of no use. One thing seems plain, and will be generally acknowledged, that, from this early original, are derived all the fanciful imitations, the gardens of the Hesperides, of Alcinous, &c. which we meet with in fabulous antiquity: And it would appear that the old serpent, who first broke into Jehovah's plantation, and wrought such mischief in it, had carried off a plan of it, and taught his deluded followers to copy it under his direction, and pervert it to his service. For we find grievous complaints in scripture of this diabolical abuse, and severe threatenings against it²: But Jehovah reclaims it, both in name and design, to himself, as the first inventor, and consequently the rightful proprietor of it. And the Beloved here, in its emblematical intendment, and under the idea of protection or defence, (which in its verbal form it is
fre-

¹ Gen. ii. 15.

² Isaiah i. 29. lxx. 3. lxxi. 17. &c.

frequently used to denote'), applies it to the church. The Mosaic account of the first garden, in its most conspicuous parts, will discover to us the *rationale* of this application. But there is a restriction, and a very necessary one, added—a garden *inclosed*, not left open by way of *common*, but shut, closed in, and secured, as by bolts and bars, which the word *noul* signifies, or, as it is rendered in the next chapter, 'lock'.² So the church is a sacred plantation for religious *service* and devout *observance*, divided and separated from the *common* of the world by hedges and fences³, secured by bolts and bars from violent or cunning intruders, and to be entered in no other way than by one proper door⁴,

A garden inclosed, a spring shut up—(inclosed, *noul*, the same word as before): *A spring*,⁵ *gel*, rather a flowing, rolling, (like the Latin, 'fluctus,' from 'fluo'), so, in application to the church, may signify a continuance of succession and rolling on, as the poet describes his river, *in omne volubilis ævum*, rolling on to the end of time. *A fountain sealed*—a fountain, fons, *πηγη*, LXX. Heb. *מַיִן*, *moin*, from *מַי*, *oin*, the eye; so the eye of water, or as our vulgar call it, a *well-eye*. Under this word of the Song, we have two gracious promises⁵—'With joy shall ye draw
' water

¹ 2 Kings xix. 34. xx. 6. Isai. xxxi. 5. Zech. ix. 15. xii. 8.

² Ver. 5.

³ Psalm lxxx. 12. Isaiah v. 2. 5, St Matth. xxi. 33. St Mark xii. 1.

⁴ St John x. 1—9.

⁵ Isaiah xii. 3.

‘ water out of the (*moinuth*) wells of salvation ;’ and
 ‘ a fountain (*moin*) shall come forth of the house of
 the Lord.’ Under another word for *fountain*,
 מֵקוּר, *mequur*, Jehovah describes himself ², ‘ They
 have forsaken me, the (*mequur*) fountain of liv-
 ing waters.’ So says the Psalmist ³, ‘ With thee
 is the fountain (*mequur*) of life.’ And so the pro-
 phet ⁴, ‘ In that day there shall be a fountain (*me-
 quur*) opened to the house of David :’ Both
 words meaning the same thing, but conveying that
 meaning in a different form, though to the same
 purpose, as is usual in the Hebrew language. The
 word belonging to Jehovah, *mequur*, from מֵקוּר, *quur*,
 to dig, may signify the reservoir that contains the
 water. The word attributed to the church here,
moin, from *oin*, the eye, may denote the coming out,
 appearance, visibility, of the water, from the *mequur*
 of Jehovah. This *moin*, fountain, is here said to be
sealed, חָתַם, *hhathum*, εσφραγισμένη, LXX. *obsignatus*,
 Latin. There is none of all the metaphors taken
 from civil use, or the knowledge of things natural,
 that is more closely or emphatically applied to
 things spiritual, than this of *sealing* ; and the ‘ seals
 of the covenant,’ however much misunderstood, is
 common, and in one sense very proper style. Every
 one knows the import of *sealing* in the affairs of
 this life, especially in confirming a deed, and esta-
 blishing a property. The Old-Testament part of
 scrip-

¹ Joel iii. 18.

³ Psalm xxxvi. 9.

² Jerem. ii. 13. xvii. 13.

⁴ Zech. xiii. 1.

scripture affords repeated instances of both its design and antiquity, and the New Testament is full and frequent in accommodat- ing it to the case before us. It is there applied to Christ, the Head of his spouse, the church, in his assumed character of Son of man¹. St Paul applies it, and by the same operation, to the church², ‘He who stablish-
 ‘eth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is
 ‘God, who hath also sealed us, (σφραγισαμεν), and
 ‘given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.’ So
 again³, ‘In whom after that ye believed, ye were
 ‘sealed (εσφραγισθητε) with that holy Spirit of pro-
 ‘mise⁴’; and⁵, ‘Grieve not the holy Spirit of God,
 ‘by whom ye are sealed (εσφραγισθητε) to the day
 ‘of redemption.’ The beloved disciple had a vi-
 sionary exhibition of this emblematical action⁶,
 ‘Sealing the servants of God in their foreheads.’
 Upon the warrant therefore of so much scripture
 authority, the truly *primitive* church had a practice
 (founded upon apostolic institution, and continued
 to this day) of representing this benedictive act, by
 the solemn laying on of the hands of the Bishop, the
 angel of the apocalypse⁷; which sacred rite, in the
 Greek part of the church was, in conformity to
 scripture style, called (σφραγισμα), *sealing*; and in
 the Latin part to the same sense, *obsignatio*, till by
 degrees,

¹ St John vi. 27. referring to St Matth. iii. 16, 17.

² 2 Cor. i. 22.

³ Eph. i. 13.

⁴ See Acts i. 4. 8. ii. 17. 39.

⁵ Ephes. iv. 30.

⁶ Rev. vii. 2-5.

⁷ See above, and compare ch. ii. and iii.

degrees, among other changes in both language and doctrine, it began among the Latins to be called, from one part of its original intention, *confirmatio*, *confirmation*; and it is perhaps this change of title, that has contributed to introduce a very inferior and defective notion of this sacred rite. But this by the bye. What I am immediately concerned in, is the character given to the church here, of a *moin hthum*, a fountain sealed. A fountain (*moin*, a well-eye) pouring out, diffusing, and spreading the waters of life and purification, not from herself, or of her own store, but in union with, and by communication from, Christ, the *mequur*, bason, grand inexhaustible reservoir, opened and issuing into the *moin*, the church, for her to carry them forward and distribute them, (like the great artery receiving its impulse from the heart, the *mequur* of animal life), in just proportion to, and through, all the various members of the 'spiritual body'; and this fountain sealed with the seal of the living God¹, the Holy Spirit of promise, the life-giving Lord, (τὸν Κύριον τὸν ζωοποιόντα, Nicene creed), sanctioning her commissioned functions, and marking, stamping, signetting her to be the chaste spouse, the unrivalled property of her BELOVED.

VER.

¹ Rev. vii. 2.

VER. 13.—*Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits, camphire, with spikenard.*

VER. 14.—*Spikenard and saffron, calamus, and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh, and aloes, with all the chief spices.*

What an exuberance of fine description we have here, and under a collection of the most delectable emblems! I am afraid we are not sufficiently acquainted with the excellent qualities of the scripture aromatics, to be able to ascertain the pertinency of this complicated allusion in every particular. No doubt the composer of this Song had a personal knowledge of their natures; and the guidance, under which we believe him, would instruct him how to point his spiritual direction of them. I shall in general observe, that the old serpent has meddled with most of this collection, and usurped them to his own use. Thus we find him seizing the pomegranate (רִמּוֹן, *remun*), which Jehovah had appropriated to his own service¹, and making a god of it, called Rimmon²; so our bard in his Proverbs³, brings in ‘the strange woman⁴’; (the adulterous mother of idolatry), perfuming her bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon⁵: And, in another place⁶ he represents her as having ‘lips that drop

VOL. II. 2 F ‘honey-

¹ Exod. xxviii. 34. xxxix. 24. 1 Kings vii. 18. 2 Chron. iv. 13.

² 2 Kings v. 18.

³ Chap. vii. 17.

⁴ Ver. 5.

⁵ Compare Psal. xlv. 8.

⁶ Chap. v. 3.

‘honeycomb,’ but so far from having the ‘scarlet sign of salvation,’ that he tells us¹, ‘that her feet go down to death, and her steps take hold on hell.’ These Satanic usurpations of Divine property, Jehovah has, by what are called his positive institutions, and by the ministry of his prophets, always reclaimed to himself, as could be shewn, if necessary, in every instance, and has employed them to their original purpose of conveying spiritual knowledge by corporeal impressions, according to that maxim which philosophy has adopted, that ‘*nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerat in sensu*—nothing can come into the understanding, but through the channel of sense. Thus, the *orchard*, the paradise of *pomegranates*, the *spikenard*, and *saffron*, with all this catalogue of *sweet spices*, by the fragrant virtues with which creating wisdom has designedly impregnated them, exhibit to us, not the virtues and moral perfections of fallen and corrupted man, as the pride of nature may vainly imagine, but that plentiful diversity of gifts, graces, and operations, which are all wrought by that ‘one and the self-same spirit, who divideth to every man severally as he willeth².’ And, though in our humble attempts to explain these emblems of Jehovah’s nomination we may fail in assigning each or any of them to its particular correspondent in the spiritual line, we shall find no small comfort in the attempt; and may rest satisfied, that, if flowing
from

¹ Ver. 5.

² 1 Cor. xii. 4—11.

from a pious intention, and soberly conducted within the prescribed limits of revelation, 'the words of our mouths and meditations of our hearts,' upon such a delightfully extensive subject, 'will be acceptable in the sight of Jehovah our rock, and our Redeemer'. The emblems in the enumeration before us are of the reclaimed class, and are here made over to the church; but in what point of view requires to be considered.

Thy plants, says the Beloved, *are a paradise of pomegranates, &c.* *Plant*, in our common acceptance, and in the scripture-use of the word, as signifying, 'setting, putting, grafting into,' is always expressed in scripture by other words, either *נָטַע*, *netho*, or *שָׁתַל*, *shathl*. Our word here is of a different, indeed a contrary meaning. It is *שָׁלַח*, *shalahhi*, masculine, from the root *שָׁלַח*, *shalahh*, to send, send forth, or extend: And under this radical idea, which never varies, though often metaphorically used, the old translations render it here, Jerom and the Vulgate, *emissiones*, Montanus and Calasio, *propagines*, the LXX. *ἀποστολαί*, which, by the very sound, enables us to fix the meaning to what occurs so often in the New Testament*, the word *apostleship*, which needs no explication. So here, 'thy apostleships, missions, (a common and proper word in ecclesiastic style), are, &c. But

2 F 2

has

* Psalm xix. 14.

* Acts i. 25. Rom. i. 5. 1 Cor. ix. 2. Gal. ii. 8.

has the church any such that can be called hers? We have two early and authentic instances: 'The apostles which were at Jerusalem', the then church, sent to Samaria Peter and John,¹ &c. and 'The church that was at Antioch', at the call of the Holy Ghost², sent away Barnabas and Saul³; and they being sent forth, emissi, by the Holy Ghost⁴; It was the Holy Ghost's act, but it was from and with the co-operation⁵ of the church to which they belonged, so was the church's act too. These were early *apostolai*, *shalahhi*, missions of the church, and she has continued, and does continue such to this day, by repeated *emissions* of her shoots, her *propagines*, whom she has been nourishing with her infused sap, to the great office of *planting and watering*, in faith and hope of the chief apostle and sender 'giving the increase'.⁶ If it shall be asked how all this will quadrate with the flowery description before us? let one of these old venerable *shalahhi* return the answer⁷: 'He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me towards the Gentiles,' the same God who worketh all in all⁸. And what the great St Paul says of himself, every succeeding *emission*, though of inferior dignity and honour

¹ Acts viii. 14.

² Acts xiii.

³ Ver. 1.

⁴ Ver. 2.

⁵ Ver. 3.

⁶ Ver. 4, &c.

⁷ Ver. 3.

⁸ 1 Cor. iii. 7.

⁹ Gal. ii. 8.

¹⁰ 1 Cor. xii. 6—11.

honour in other respects, yet if emitted in the same regular way, and by the same authority, may say also, and trust to the same assistance in diffusing the precious odour of the Holy Ghost's communications, so variously emblemized in this verse; or, in St Paul's language, 'in being unto 'God a sweet savour of Christ';' and making even the weak performances of the faithful become 'an odour of a sweet smell, well pleasing to God': Remembering still, that this blessed honour of conveying blessing belongs only to the shoots, the *apostolai* of, and from, the church's garden; not to every rash volunteering runner, which, from a fond opinion of its own inherent qualities, may boldly assume that honour, and thereby run the risk of bringing a curse upon itself, by wantonly pretending to convey blessing to others. Such plants may be a thicket of nettles, briars, thistles, noxious stinking weeds. It is the church's plants, and none but they, that in the Beloved's sight are *an orchard of pomegranates, &c.*

VER. 15.—*A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.*

This is the finishing stroke given by the Beloved's pencil at this time, and completes the admirable picture. *A fountain* (*mo'in*, the same word as above) *of gardens, gannim*, in the plural number. The

† 2 Cor. ii. 15.

* Philip. iv. 18.

The church is the Beloved's *one* garden, the garden of his own plantation. There may be, have been, and still are, other gardens, satanic, idolatrous imitations, dry barren wastes, gardens that have no water (a threatened curse¹), and which can never be watered, till they be placed by the fountain of the Beloved's garden, the river², which came out of Eden, (see Psalm xxxvi. 8. 'the river of thy pleasures,' נַחֲלֵי, thy Eden), to water the archetypal garden, and thence was parted into four heads (*rashim*, Heb. אֵפְסָס, LXX. capital springs), to spread through all lands, and communicate to them the parabolical blessing³ of being 'gardens by the river side.' *A fountain of gardens*—fitted for, and capable of, this extensive office, by being *a well of living waters*, which are here said to *stream* (נָחִיל, *nezlim*, used to denote the fluxes of the stars, 2 Kings xxiii. 5.) from Lebanon, the favourite type in inspired poetry, (the Parnassus in the heathen), as the original river, the Helicon of fabulous perversion, went out from Eden, the place of delight. Water is a well known element both for internal and external use, and is often mentioned in scripture, sometimes as an emblem of distress, but most frequently in a sense of comfort, as here, by the addition of *living*—*a well of living waters*, which, in the spiritual acceptation, conveys its own meaning.

The

¹ Isaiah i. 30. Zech. ix. 11.

² Gen. ii. 10.

³ Numb. xxiv. 6. Compare Ezek. xxxi. 7.

The word for *well* is **בַּר**, *bar*, which we meet with early in an affair that St Paul expressly calls allegorical: 'The angel of the Lord ² found Hagar by 'a fountain of water ³, wherefore the well was called 'בַּר לְחִי רַאִי, *bar lehi rai*, the well of him that liveth 'and seeth me,' or 'whom I see,' as the LXX. render it ⁴. We meet with the word again, and with the addition of 'living water,' where it is said ⁵, 'And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and 'found (*bar mina khaim*, **Φεαρ υδατος ζωντος**, LXX.) 'a well of living water.' Digging of wells in those patriarchal times was an act of faith, and had a typical aspect. So says Moses, in mystical style ⁶, 'Then sang Israel this song, Spring up, O well, 'sing ye unto it: the princes digged the well, the 'nobles of the people digged it by (direction of) 'the lawgiver, (*bemehokkah*, in typifactorem, to 'be a typifier), with their staves (*bemashontem*, in 'fulcrum strum), to be a supporter to them.' Isaac was a prince, as his father Abraham had been ⁷, and their servants were nobles. The history tells us ⁸, that all the wells, which the servants of Abraham

(the

¹ Gal. iv. 24.

² Gen. xvi. 7. where, by the bye, let it be observed, that this is the first time we read of angel, or angelic appearance, full 2000 years after the creation.

³ Ver. 14.

⁴ **Φεαρ υδατος ανδρος**, see v. 13. **אֵל רַאִי**, *al rai*, Deus visionis meae, 'the God of my sight.'—Buxtorf.

⁵ Gen. xxvi. 19.

⁶ Numb. xxi. 17.

⁷ Gen. xxiii. 6.

⁸ Gen. xxv. 15.

(the father of the faithful¹) had digged, had been stopped up by the Philistine infidels; and when Isaac in succession, and under the same direction, digged his first well, these infidels quarrelled with him about it; and, on a second attempt, renewed their opposition, which made him give names significant of oppression and satanic hatred to these two, and leave them. But upon his digging a *third* time, these heathenish contenders quarrelled not, and he called the name of it Rehoboth, *ευρυχωρια*, LXX. 'for now,' he said, 'Jehovah (*erehib*) hath made 'room for us².' This is a word much employed in the poetic compositions of scripture, to convey the idea of blessing. I shall only give one instance, where the original has a most beautiful antithesis³, 'I called upon the Lord in distress, (literally, from *emetzr*, de angustia, the narrow place), 'and the Lord answered me (*bemerahhab*) into a 'roomy place,' or, as the Bible translation has properly explained it, 'answered me and set me in 'a large place⁴.'

From this typical history of Isaac's wells, it is evi-

¹ Gal. iii. 7.

² Ver. 22.

³ Psalm cxviii. 5.

⁴ May there not be an allusion to this idea in the name of the woman quoted above, רַבָּב, (the very letters of this root), *Rabab*, who for a while was literally *temetzr*, in a strait, shut up, confined, (ελαθι, latuit, as St Paul says), hid, under the scarlet sign of faith, in a narrow place, but was answered and brought out (*bemerahhab*) into a large, safe space, into the glorious liberty, the happy freedom, 'free air of the 'Israel of God?'

evident, what a sacred regard was paid by the church of these primitive times to wells of water¹, especially when designedly digged, or occasionally met with, in faith under divine impulse, and thereby impregnated with the precious quality annexed in the Song, of becoming *living waters*. This is the grand distinction, the endearing character which cannot but recommend itself to us. It was under this character of *mim hhiim*, 'ὕδωρ ζῶν, LXX. *aquas vivas*, Latin, *living water* (though our translation renders it 'running') that it is applied to cleanse the leper², and to purify the unclean³; in both cases denoting 'blessing'. Whereas in the case of the jealous husband and suspected wife⁴, the application of water to the woman is under the terrible epithet of 'bitter water that causeth a curse'; a difference which to be sure cannot be owing to the inherent quality of any kind of natural water itself, but must be solely attributed to an immediate operation of him who maketh all created nature subservient to his own purposes; of him who, as St Paul says of the difference of savour⁵, is to the wicked 'a consuming fire⁶, but unto his own people, 'is the fountain-head of living waters⁷.' In this emblematical style of blessing we have a promise⁸, that

VOL. II. 2 G 'living

¹ Gen. xxi. 25—31. xxiv. 12—44. xxix. 2—11. and compare Psalm lxxxiv. 6.

² Levit. xiv. 5, 6.

³ Numb. xix. 17.

⁴ Numb. v. 17. 27.

⁵ 2 Cor. ii. 16.

⁶ Deut. iv. 24.

⁷ Jerem. ii. 13.

⁸ Zech. xiv. 8.

‘ *living waters* should go forth of Jerusalem,’ alluded to by two former prophets¹, and exemplified in vision to a subsequent one². Yea, so expressive of good things is this language, that the Beloved, in the days of his flesh, continued to use it; as in that instructively condescending conversation with the poor sinful woman of Samaria³, ‘ Thou shouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee ‘ *living water* ;’ and again⁴, ‘ the water, that I shall ‘ give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.’ And still more to our purpose, in a public and controversial discourse with the people in the temple⁵, ‘ He that ‘ believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out ‘ of his belly shall flow rivers of *living water*.’ May we not suppose, that in this quotation of scripture, as it certainly is a quotation, he might have had an eye to this comparison, or rather declaration here in our Song, which, of all the passages where *living water* is spoken of, not excepting the prophecy of Zechariah, which comes nearest to it, is the most apposite to both his design in, and the words of, this figurative way of expressing himself? He here, from his own mouth, attributes to ‘ believing in him,’ the mystical privilege of emitting, sending forth, or making to flow, *streams of living water*. The same privilege is in the Song assigned

¹ Ezek. xlvii. 1. and Joel iii. 18.

² Rev. xxii. 1.

³ St John iv. 10.

⁴ Ver. 14.

⁵ St John vii. 38.

signed to the church, as subsequent to her look from the *top of Amana*, the principle of faith : And both of them, in language of parallel sound as well as sense, described as thankful receivers, not as primary providers ; and receiving too, not for their own private benefit only, but likewise for the public office of faithfully conveying to others, these communicated *waters of life*, in remembrance and execution of his own command ¹, ‘ Freely ye have received, freely give.’ If this shall be admitted, as there is great probability, if not proof for it, we have an irrefragable testimony to the divine authority of our Song ; and, in any case, the striking similarity of expression gives us an authentic exposition from an infallible pen, of St John’s account ², ‘ This spake he of the Spirit, which they ‘ that believe in him were to receive,’ applied by himself in these words ³, ‘ Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and ye ‘ shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, ‘ and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth’—shall become *a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters*, going out from Jerusalem ⁴, half of them toward the *former sea*, the patriarchal original church of Israel ⁵, and half of them toward the *hinder sea*, ‘ the uttermost parts of ‘ the earth’ ⁶, the after, succeeding church of the

2 G 2

Gentile

¹ St Matth. x. 8.² Chap. vii. 39.³ Acts i. 8.⁴ Isaiah ii. 3. Acts i. 4.⁵ Rom. ix. 4, 5.⁶ Acts ii. 39.

Gentile converts', 'that Jehovah may be king
'over all the earth' !'

VER. 16.—*Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south,
blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may
flow out : let my Beloved come into his garden, and
eat his pleasant fruits.*

Here the spouse, as we may now warrantably call her, takes up the new title of *garden*, which the Beloved had put into her mouth, and in an extatic rapture of humble joy, invites him into it, after being first prepared properly for his reception. And how is this preparation to be carried on? By herself? No: *Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south, blow upon my garden.* We had seen in the last verse one of the elements of nature, as they are called, the element of water, beautifully employed to figure out some grand benefit, blessing, or privilege of the church. Here we have another of these elements, the element of air (wind, spirit) brought in with the same view, and to carry on the same figure. So harmoniously uniform, so truly philosophical, is the scripture language every where, through this elegant poem in a particular manner. *Awake, וָקוּם, ouri*, not as out of sleep, (for which the Hebrew has another word, *iqetz*, Psal. lxxviii. 65.) but in the sense of activity or fortitude,

¹ Acts xiii. 46, 47.

² Zech. xiv. 8, 9. Psalm ii. 6, 8, &c.

tude, like ‘*suscita, excita* ;’ as, ‘*Awake, (oturi, our*
‘*word here)*, awake, Deborah, utter a song ;’ and
still more in point ², ‘*Awake, (ouri)*, awake, put on
‘*strength, O arm of the Lord,*’ which will shew the
pertinency of the present address ³. *Awake, O north.*
Our translation has added *wind*, and, from the subse-
quent call to *blow*, properly enough. The word is
~~ἵκεν~~ *tzephun*, which radically signifies to hide, con-
ceal, lay up, (*occultare, abscondere*. Latin, *κρυπτεν*,
κατακρυπτεν, Greek), and is seldom used in plain his-
torical narration, but frequently in enigmatical
speech, as in Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and Prophets,
and for the most part in a good sense. In the
Psalms we have many comfortable promises under
this word : ‘*In the time of trouble he shall hide me*
‘*in his pavilion* ⁴ :’ ‘*O how great is thy goodness*
‘*which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee* ⁵ !’
‘*Thou shalt keep them secretly in thy pavilion*
‘*from the strife of tongues* ⁶ :’ ‘*They have tak-*
‘*en counsel together against thy hidden secret*
‘*ones.*’

¹ Judges v. 12.

² Isaiah li. 9.

³ The prophet has an addition here, ‘*Art thou not it which hath cut*
‘*Rahab*’ and I mention it, not as any way relative to my subject, but
to prevent a mistake which our English pronunciation may occasion, as if
the prophet’s object of the Divine severity was the same with the Rahab
of whom both Old and New Testament speak so favourably : whereas
the prophet’s Rahab (רַהַב, *reb*), is a different word, signifying pride,
vain glory, or haughtiness, and in that bad sense is thought to denote
Egypt—Psalm lxxxvii. 4. and lxxxix. 11.

⁴ Psalm xxvii. 5.

⁵ Psalm xxxi. 19.

⁶ Ver. 20.

‘ones’.¹ We find under this word the name of a place, Baal-zephon², which, from the prefix *Baal*, Lord, appears to have been dedicated to a satanic idol, clothed with this attribute: And which is more, to show the importance of this word, we have a prophet of Jehovah named from it, צפניה, *Ze-phaniah*, (occultatus, occultator, the occult one, of *Jah*, the essence). It is needless to enquire into the natural qualities of the north wind, or what influence it may have on aromatic gardens; these may vary according to the difference of climate, situation, and season. But the influences of the *tzephun* here applied to for blowing, are at all times, and in all places, the same, and to be discovered from the real meaning of the word in its general use. There was once a system of natural philosophy, indeed for a long time the prevailing one, which dealt much in what is called *occult qualities*, to account for effects, when it could not clearly describe the cause: And, though this ancient system be much exploded now, and attempts made to explain the several phænomena of nature, some by the abstruse terms of gravitation, attraction, cohesion, and the like, others by the settled agency of an *original* and *universal* mechanism, it will be allowed, I hope, that there are many wonderful things in nature, which cannot be consistently adjusted to either of these schemes;

¹ Psalm lxxxv. iii. where the LXX. have it, κατὰ τοὺς ἁγίους σου, and Jerom and the Vulgate, ‘adversus sanctos tuos—against thy saints.’

² Exod. xiv. 2.

schemes ; and therefore, though undoubtedly the effect of some cause, yet as being still dark and obscure, may be referred to the old solution of *occult qualities* : And if this shall be found the case in things natural, how much (more so in what is the present object of our notice, things spiritual ? Sure I am, there is a conclusion of this kind drawn by One who, though not a professed philosopher, yet knew as much about nature as any one else ever did, or ever will know : and he thus argues, ‘ The wind (το πνευμα, the spirit) bloweth where it listeth, (he willeth), and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it (he) cometh, nor whether it (he) goeth ; so is every one that is born (ἐκ τοῦ πνευματος) of the spirit ’. Here, whatever shall become of the trite analogy thought to be in this text, but to be found only in our English way of rendering the same word, and with the article too, by *wind*, in the beginning of the verse, and by *spirit* in the end of it, which indeed forms a sort of analogy, we have an *effect* ascertained, and the *efficient* assigned, but the manner of the operation declared to be unknown and occult. May not this lead to a discovery of the spouse’s *tzephun*, occult agent, who works when, and where, and how he willeth, acting in his assumed character of רוח, *ruhh*, πνευμα, spiritus, ventus, spirit, wind, blowing, breathing and inspiring. We have two prophetic allusions pointing this way, which it may be useful to take

take notice of. In that grand vision exhibited to Ezekiel, he tells us ¹, 'he looked and behold a 'whirlwind, (רוּחַ סֹדֶה, *ruh h sode*, πνεύμα βλασταια, a rushing 'mighty wind'), came out of *tze-phun*, the north,' and ushered in the appearance of 'the four cheru-bic living creatures ².' The other is in Zechariah ³, 'These are the four spirits (Heb. *ruhhuth*, 'LXX. ἀνεμοί, Jerom and the marg. 'winds'), of 'the heavens, ⁴ &c. behold these that go toward 'the north country have quieted my spirit (*enihku 'ath ruhhi*, Heb. ἀνεπαύσαυ LXX. requiescere fece-runt, Lat. made my spirit rest) in the north coun-try, *aretz trephun*, the land of the *tze-phun*.' Which happy land, the northern parts of the earth, in these prophetic times, occult, as it were, and not reach-ed to by the Sun of righteousness, now blessed with the spirit of Jehovah resting in them, have long distinguishingly been, still are, and may they by his blessing long continue to be!

But before proper application can be made of the explication I have offered, we must take a look at the other branch of this call. *Awake, tze-phun, come thou south*, רוּחַ יְמִינִי, *timn*, from *imn*, the right hand. I have already said enough about the importance of the right hand, which may serve to elucidate the junction here, not as addressing or in-

¹ Ch. i. 4.

² Acts ii. 2.

³ Rev. v. 6. 8, &c.

⁴ Ch. vi. 5.

⁵ Ver. 8.

invoking two opposite winds at one time, which in fact would be impossible, and therefore absurd in wish, but as describing the same agent, blower, breather, *ruh*, spirit, wind, under different appellations, and in what we might call different attitudes, yet all with the same view, and to the same gracious effect. There is something serviceable to our purpose, as relative to this second appellation in Zachariah's vision, where the four *ruhhuth* are said to 'go forth from standing על ארץ, *ol adun*¹, 'before, or by the Lord of the whole earth,' the *Adoni*, to whom Jehovah said, 'Sit thou on my 'right hand'. Accordingly this *Adon*, (or made Lord²), tells his disciples³, that he will send to them, the Comforter, the spirit of truth, the *ruh*, who to execute his undertaken office in the concerted scheme of mercy, proceeds from the Father and the Son, the *Ruh Tzephun*, the occult agent, who coming from, and in co-operation with the *timn*, the influences of the איש, *aish*, the man, person of the right hand, silently and where not wilfully resisted, effectually רפיה, *epihh*⁴, πνευ, *spirat*⁵, breathes in and upon the garden of the church, collectively and individually, to exhale and sweeten the fragrancy of his own infused odours, and thereby prepare an agreeable entertainment, 'a savour of

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'rest,'

¹ Compare Gen. xviii. 2.² Psalm cx. 1. lxxx. 18.³ Acts ii. 36.⁴ St John xv. 26. xvi. 7.⁵ See this explained above, chap. ii. 3. 17.⁶ St John iii. 8.

'rest,' for the spirit of her beloved *Adon*, in the midst of her'. It is well known how necessary and effective the occult qualities (occult still to the most piercing eye of philosophic investigation) of the material *ruhh*, air, spirit, wind, are to produce, ripen, and perfect flowers, spices, or aromatic shrubs, and to inspire into them the delicious smells, tastes and flavours, for which they are severally in such esteem; and the attentive christian will readily discover a parallel in the spiritual system. We have a grand exemplification of the force and influence of this agent in Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones², 'So I prophesied as I was 'commanded³, and the breath (*ruh*, *ruhh*, wind) 'came into them, and they *lived*.' This same prophet gives us a beautiful conjunction of the two capital parts of the description before us⁴, 'Then 'will I sprinkle clean water upon you'—'and I 'will put a new spirit within you⁵.

² St Matth xviii. 20.

³ Chap. xxxvii.

³ Ver. 10.

⁴ Chap. xxxvi. 25, 26.

⁵ St John iii. 5.

CHAP. V.

VER. 1.—*I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O Beloved.*

THE division of the chapters here is no advantage to the poem: The last verse of the fourth, and this first of the fifth, might have made a short chapter like the 117th Psalm. This verse is a gracious answer from the Beloved to the spouse's affectionate invitation, and expressed much in the same language. No further explication, therefore, being necessary, I shall only offer a few observations. The spouse, in her call to the winds, had named the garden her own, *blow upon my garden*, but in her address to the Beloved, she calls it *his* garden, and he adopts the specification, *I am come into my garden*. Does not this change of style suggest the propriety, if not the necessity, of the Spirit's (the *ruhh*, wind) antecedent breathing or blowing, to fit and prepare the church for becoming the property, the *peculium* of her Beloved, thus

exemplified to the apocalypt¹, ‘The spirit and the bride say, Come.’ And may not the Beloved’s account of himself, in this description, be thought to have reference to his incarnation-state; when, on his very entrance, as it were, into his garden, he had *myrrh* with frankincense presented to him; and when, in his infant years, he was literally nourished with *milk*, as had been prophesied of him under the title of *Immanu-cl*, ‘Butter and honey shall he eat².’ *I have drunk my wine with my milk*:—All of his own furnishing, not of his spouse’s providing, as illustrated, and, as it were, looked back to, by the evangelical prophet Isaiah³. ‘Ho, every one—come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price,’ therefore the free gift of him, whose property it is, and who here, as by the same instrument in another place⁴, makes offer of this feast of joy with the most flowing kindness of invitation, ‘Eat, O friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved.’ No christian, I hope, needs be told what this points at, as it is more particularly expressed by our Poet, where he says in his Proverbs, ‘Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.’ But the emphatic repetition in the latter part of the present invitation, is what I would have especially taken notice of.—*Drink abundantly*, שכר, *shacru*: Our margins have it, ‘be drunken,’ the LXX. μεθύσθητε, Jerom and the

¹ Rev. xxii. 17.

² Isaiah vii. 15.

³ Chap. lv. 1.

⁴ Prov. ix. 5.

the Vulgate, inebriamini, all conveying the idea of 'drunkenness,' either in a good or bad sense, as the context directs. Here the highest authority limits it to a good sense, and supposes an 'inebriation' of a commendable nature. The apostle's caution, 'Be not drunk with wine,' *ne inebriemini vino*¹, does not go against this: For he immediately qualifies it by speaking of 'excess,' which would spoil the use of even the wine here alluded to, and we find the Corinthians blamed on this account². May not all this be of some use in removing from Noah, a preacher of righteousness, the reproach which the bad sense of this word has so universally, but, in my opinion, so unjustly thrown upon him? 'Noah planted a vineyard,' we are told³, 'and he drank of the wine, (יִשְׁכַּר, *veischar*, 'ἐμεθυσθη, LXX. inebriatus est, Vulgate), and was 'drunken,' &c. Much moral wisdom has been employed on the topic of Noah's drunkenness; and the good patriarch has been drawn in a very disagreeable attitude, as a beacon, it is said, to us to beware of the rock on which he was like to have been wrecked; and all this occasioned by affixing a bad sense to a word, which as we see here admits of a good one. Noah, יִשְׁכַּר, *ischar*; so did Joseph's brethren⁴, יִשְׁכְּרוּ, *ischru*, which our translation reads, 'were merry 'with him.' Besides how can this affair of Noah be said to have been set up, or be by us viewed as a warn-

¹ Ephes. v. 18.² 1 Cor. xi. 21:³ Gen. ix. 20, 21.⁴ Gen. xliii. 34.

warning, when the spirit of God puts no stigma or reproof upon it, in which case we are taught by Irenæus, 'non nos esse accusatores, sed typum querere—not to be accusers, but to look out for a type.' Indeed the example, taking it altogether, looks rather the typical way, than the way of accusation. 'Noah awoke from his wine', and knew 'what his younger son had done unto him.' Let us not add to the text to account for his coming to that knowledge, but take the whole as it stands, with the wonderful prophecies immediately emitted by him, in consequence of his inebriation, which it is owned on all hands have been literally accomplished; and which, none will say, could be the effects of a carnal and culpable drunkenness. But enough of this; which I have offered, not so much to vindicate our venerable progenitor², as to shew how capable scripture is to elucidate itself, by giving us, as in this instance, a key in one place, to open up any apparent difficulty in another. And now to return to the Song, where, whatever shall become of my explication of this verse, it is certain that some such typical and allusive explication is necessary, as no stretch of accommodation can adjust it to a literal sense, on any hypothesis whatever. And the same is the case with what follows from the second to the eighth verse, where the spouse's situation is described to be, with only some

¹ Compare Psalm lxxviii. 65.

² See above on chap. iii. 5.

some additional variety of circumstances, much like what it was in the 3d and 4th chapters; therefore the more difficult to be accounted for on the common supposition.

VER. 2.—*I sleep, but my heart waketh; it is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled; for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.*

I sleep, but my heart waketh.—An abrupt introduction, uncertain in its application to natural sleep, but in the spiritual sense highly expressive and edifying. *The voice of my Beloved that knocketh.*—Let the Apocalypt explain this¹: ‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock.’ The additional characters here are sublimely descriptive of the Beloved’s ardent affection, by an accumulation of fond and endearing appellations; and his account of himself is allusive to his low state of humanity, similar in so far to the Psalmist’s account of him², ‘the dew of thy birth,’ compared with other places where dew is spoken of as a blessing, ‘the dew of Hermon on the hill of Zion, there the Lord promised his blessing³.’

VER.

¹ Rev. iii. 20.

² Psalm cx. 3.

³ Psalm cxxxiii. See particularly, with a view to the present phraseology, Deut. xxxii. 2. Micah v. 1. See also Gen. xxvii. 28. 39. Deut. xxxiii. 28, &c.

VER. 3.—*I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?*

An ungrateful return to such a gracious and pressing request; and the sloth, from which it proceeded, is stigmatized by Solomon in strong language '—' The slothful saith, There is a lion in the way; as a door turneth on its hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed; the slothful hideth his hand in his bosom, it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth.' All which is parabolically condemned by the 'greater than Solomon'—'they all with one consent began to make excuse—none of these men that were bidden shall taste of my supper.' Yet ungrateful and provoking as this excuse-making practice is, nothing is more common than such pretences for it as these under our present notice. Those who made the excuses in the parable had some plausibility of reason on their side. The necessary attendance on lawful and important business, and the festivity of marriage, which under the Jewish œconomy freed the man from any public avocation for the first year, might be thought a sufficient apology for their not accepting the favour designed for them. But how trifling, how pitiful, is the excuse before us, in any view which can be taken of it? In the latter part of it indeed, there seems to be, under the mask of cleanliness, a little tincture of self-sufficiency and arro-

¹ Prov. xxvi. 13, 14, 15.

² St Luke xiv. 17. 24.

rogance. *I have washed my feet.*—We know by whom this was performed with great solemnity¹, and where we are told, ‘If the Beloved wash us not, we have no part with him.’ Yet here the spouse boasts of it as her own personal act, properly enough in a natural sense, but far otherwise in things spiritual, where a dependance on our own cleanness, as the effect of our own moral industry, too often prevents our attendance to the call of the great, the divine Cleanser, and to the means which he has sanctified to that purpose. Nor is this all that is blameable in what is here pretended. *I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?*—Would opening to her Beloved necessarily have defiled her feet? Even in this low light, the supposition of such a thing is uncivil; but in the higher application, it is beyond all measure insufferable. Can any christian, consistently with character, allow himself to think obedience to the divine call, in any instance, either inconsistent with the purity, or derogatory from the dignity of human nature? What a severe reproof is here couched in emblematical language? Let us all examine how far we are liable to it.

VER. 4.—*My Beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.*

Still intent and ardent in his love, ‘waiting to
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¹ St John xiii. 4—11.

‘be gracious,’ notwithstanding the repulse he had met with. Some of our paraphrasts are very acute in describing the *door* here, with a latch and a latch-hole, like the doors of our country cottages, and are copious in admiring the simplicity of these old times. But unluckily for this grand discovery, there is no door in the text, being inserted by our translators. Jerom had seen this particular in another light, when in his second preface to his translation of St Matthew’s gospel, he says, ‘*Ecclesia autem, quæ Domini voce supra petram fundata est, quam introduxit Rex in cubiculum suum, et ad quam per foramen descensionis occultæ misit manum suum,*’ &c. i. e. ‘The church, which by the voice of the Lord was founded upon a rock, whom the king brought into his chamber, and to whom he put his hand through the whole of his hidden descent,’ &c. Which may in so far justify my allusion to the humanity : And from this repeated act of condescension, we cannot but see how earnest he is, that our acceptance of him should be our own voluntary act, and the effect of our free choice. ‘I stand at the door,’ says he, ‘and knock ; if any man hear my voice, and will open the door, I will come in to him.’ The hearing the voice is in a manner forced upon us : but the hearkening to it, and complying with it, is from ourselves ; ‘take heed therefore how you hear’ ! He could make open doors to himself

self if he pleased ; but the way of power is not his ordinary way ; he chooses to knock and call, and touch : and this last touch of his hand did the business—*My bowels were moved for him.*

VER. 5.—*I rose up to open to my Beloved, and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock.*

She is now sensible of her mistake, and seeks to atone for it, by the costliness of the ingredients for his reception. What a deal of adventitious trouble is usually occasioned by one false step ? This holds in common life, and is attested by universal experience : Much more so in the concerns of religion, where the work of repentance, when the heart is duly impressed, and the bowels properly moved, is more laborious, more burdensome, and more grievous, than all the rigours of watchfulness and care in the constant and uniform exercise of a religious course. A step or two from her bed to her chamber door, would have saved our fair one all that hurry of running, all that fatigue of body and vexation of soul, which to her sad cost she now found vastly beyond the momentary trouble of putting on her robe again, or the foolish fear of defiling her feet. But ‘*jacta fuit alea—the dye was cast.*’ ‘If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid (in the present case, hid only for a while) from thine eyes.’”

VER. 6.—*I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone; I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he answered not.*

‘As many as I love,’ says the Beloved, ‘I re-
buke and chasten’; παιδεύω, train up and discipline as a child, by such various ways as the wisdom of the parent sees fit. So here, his presence had been neglected, his absence is the chastisement of that neglect. *My Beloved had withdrawn*—פָּחַ, *hhamq*, in the verbal form, only here and in Jeremiah², How long wilt thou (פָּחַתְּ, *ethamqin*), go
‘about—the Lord hath created a new thing in the
‘earth, a woman shall compass a man.’ It might be thought too fanciful to hint any analogy between these two places, from their being the only two where the word is found; though it is the opinion of sundry commentators, and not an ill-founded one, that the Beloved is concerned in the passage in Jeremiah, as well as in that before us. *I sought him, but I found him not; I called him, but he gave me no answer.*—Lamented here as a melancholy fact, and threatened in the same words by this writer, in another of his works³, ‘I called,
‘and ye refused—therefore shall they call upon
‘me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me,
‘but they shall not find me.’ The scenery in the
beginning

¹ Rev. iii. 19.

² Chap. xxxi. 22.

³ Prov. i. 24—28.

beginning of the 3d chapter was a trial of his spouse's faith ; this is a punishment of her folly. ' These things are written for our admonition ; and ' let him, that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest ' he fall '.

VER. 7.—*The watchmen that went about the city found me ; they smote me, they wounded me ; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.*

What the *watchmen* here, and in the 3d chapter, are, is not hard to find out. In the former chapter they are barely mentioned, but here they are spoken of as behaving in a way not easy to be accounted for, either in the natural or spiritual sense. *They smote me, they wounded me.*—What to make of this, or how to apply it, is the difficulty. The watchmen, who should guard and protect the church, forgetting their duty, and acting so much out of character, is indeed a heavy charge : but it has often been realised. Old Eli's sons, to their father's great grief, were watchmen of this stamp. ' They made ' the Lord's people to transgress, (marg. to cry ' out), and abhor the offering of the Lord '². ' Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh ' but in vain '³—keep the city as from the assaults of declared enemies, so likewise from the smitings and woundings of treacherous and insulting watchmen. The watchmen, in the days of the Be-
loved's

¹ 1 Cor. x. 12.

² 1 Sam. chap. ii.

³ Psalm cxxvii. 1.

loved's humiliation, the Scribes and Pharisees, the Priests and Elders, were notorious for 'smiting' and wounding,' discouraging and persecuting such as sought the Beloved'. Whether, or how far, after-times have seen the like boisterous conduct in watchmen, I need not stop at present to enquire. *The keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.* — I should be willing to think that the change of appellation here indicates some change in behaviour, and is more than ornamental tautology. There is a passage in the 8th chapter which perhaps may throw some light on this: 'We have a little sister — if she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver.' Obscure as this is, it speaks something favourable to the little sister of the Gentile church. And if the *keepers of the walls* may be thought to have any relation that way, St Paul will give us the application, where he says², 'Until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in reading the Old Testament, which veil is done away in Christ; for even to this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart: but when their heart shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.' There is certainly a strong semblance of analogy here; and as St Paul has evidently allegorized Moses' real veil³, it is warrant enough

¹ 'This rabble who know not the law are accursed,' St John vii. 49. 'Thou wast altogether born in sin, and dost thou teach us?' and they excommunicated him, St John ix. 34.

² 2 Cor. iii. 14, 15, 16.

³ These were types, τύποι, 1 Cor. x. 6. 11. to the christian scheme.

enough for me to adapt the spouse's poetical veil to the same purpose. There is a similarity of both language and circumstances between the poet and the apostle; 'Her heart was turning to the Lord'—*My bowels were moved towards him.* Then was her veil taken off. The apostle attributes this operation to the SPIRIT¹; the poet to the *keepers of the walls*, parallel to the apostle's 'ministers of the Spirit²'.

VER. 8.—*I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my Beloved, that you tell him, I am sick of love.* [This has been explained already in both its parts.]

VER. 9.—*What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved, O thou fairest among women? What is thy Beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?*

It is not necessary that these enquirers should be considered as present, or actually putting the question in person. This is a piece of poetic art to usher in the beautiful description of the Beloved that follows to the end of the chapter.

VER. 10.—*My Beloved is fair and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.*

Fair, טַז, *tzahh*, not properly *fair*, as applied under another

¹ Ver. 17.

² Ver. 6.

another word to the spouse in the former verse. It occurs but seldom¹, and is variously rendered, mostly to a good sense, *candidus*, white, fair, in the sense of candid or candour. *White and ruddy*, אָדוּם, *adum*, from *adm*, man, or man coloured². That passage in the Lamentations of Jeremiah³ is most apposite to our purpose, and seems to be almost a copy of the Song. 'Her Nazarites⁴ were purer than snow⁵, they were whiter (צָהוּ, *tzahu*) than milk, they were more ruddy (אָדְמוּ *admu*) than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire⁶.' The prophet's joyful retrospect, contrasted with the melancholy change in the immediately following verse, will throw light on the fair one's painting, and direct to the meaning in both.

The chiefest among ten thousand.—*The chiefest*, רִגּוּל, *rāgul*, vexillatus, standard-bearer, (on the margin of our Bibles), but properly, the word being passive with the *vau* in the third order, 'standard-ed,' or⁷, 'bannered,' like *knight-banneret*, invested with that dignity after, and for, some victory or great action, and more honourable than 'standard-bearer.' *Among ten thousand*, מֵרַבָּה, *merabbe*, ἀπο μυριαδων. I know the Lexicons countenance this rendering

¹ Isaiah xviii. 4. xxxii. 4. lviii. 11. Jerem. iv. 11. Lament. iv. 7.

² See above in chap. iii. 6.

³ Chap. iv. 7.

⁴ St Matth. ii. 23.

⁵ Psalm li. 7. lxviii. 14. Isaiah i. 18.

⁶ His belly overlaid with sapphires, Song v. 14.

⁷ It is so rendered Psalm xx. 5. and Song ii. 4. 'banner,' which is the same with 'standard.' See Numbers, ch. ii.

dering, but give no reason for it. Why the specific number of ten thousand should be pitched upon, has never been accounted for. When this precise number occurs in historical narration, as it does about twenty times, it is always expressed by the word for ten, *oshr* and *alp*, a thousand, *oshr*, *alp*, or *alvim*: Whereas the word here used, *rabbe*, is only found in enigmatic speech, or poetic rapture¹. The root is רב, *rab*, and is of extensive import in the sense of greatness, great in dignity, in quality, in character. The other Hebrew word for great גדל, *gedal*, conveys the idea of quantity, bulk, or magnitude, and answers to our *big*. There are many places in scripture, where *rab* cannot signify 'many:' as where it is said², 'The elder, *rab*, shall 'serve the younger;' which St Paul, in his quotation of it³, has properly rendered ὁ μείζων, 'the 'greater*.' And in most of those places where it is translated, what I own it can sometimes bear, by MANY, this radical sense of greatness would be found equally agreeable to the context. Indeed there are some places where the sense of 'many' takes away from the beauty, perhaps from the de-

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sign,

¹ As in Numbers x. 36. Deut. xxxii. 30. xxxiii. 2. 17. 1 Sam. xviii. 7. 'David his ten thousands,' Psalm iii. 7.

² Gen. xlv. 23.

³ Rom. ix. 12.

⁴ Job xxxiii. 12. 'God (ירבדו, *irbe*) is 'greater than man.' Psalm xlviii. 2., 'the city of Melk *rab*, the great king.' Prov. xxvi. 10. רב, *rab*, 'the great,' we read 'the great God, who formed all things.' Isaiah xix. 20. 'He shall send them a Saviour, (ורב, *verab*), and a 'great one, lxiii. 1. *rab*, 'mighty to save.'

sign of the passage¹. But there is one character of Jehovah, under this word, most remarkably frequent in the mouths of the holy men of those old times²; and when we read ‘multitude of mercy,’ the original is רַב הַחֶסֶד, *rab hhashd*, magnus misericors, ‘the great merciful one, the prince of mercy’³. If this therefore be the true sense of *rab*, its derivative, *rabbe*, must carry the same sense, ‘greatness;’ and, when necessarily denoting number, be ‘great number,’ or, as we say, ‘a great many:’ And so the description here will be, insignitus, elevatus a, vel præ majestate, ‘raised, elevated, by, or with ‘majesty’⁴.’ I have been at the more pains with the

¹ See above on ch. ii. 3. Ezekiel’s *otz rab*, and on ch. iii. 9. 10. Solomon’s *rab iuotz*.

² Psalm v. 8. lxi. 14. lxxxvi. 5. ciii. 8, &c.

³ The Psalmist, Psalm xvi. 10, as explained by St Peter, Acts ii. 31. and by St Paul, Acts xiii. 35. attributes this word (ἁγιος, holy) to Christ; and under the same word, *bhashd*, Isaiah exhibits a gracious promise, ch. lv. 3. which St Paul, Acts xiii. 35. applies to Christ, ‘I will give you the sure mercies of David.’ Joined, therefore, as it so currently is, to *rab*, *rab-bhashd* will lead to an idea which cannot but be peculiarly comfortable to every christian, above even the consolation of the ordinary rendering, and would be in New Testament style, ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, ‘for Christ’s sake.’ To confirm still farther this primary sense of *rab*, let it be observed, that it is used to denote the chief of any office, as *Rabshakeh*, chief cup-bearer, *Rabsaris*, chief chamberlain, *Nebuzaradan-rab*, captain of the guard, literally, chief butcher, *Rabchabl*, Jonah i. 6. shipmaster, chief ropeman. And to put the matter entirely out of doubt, the well-known title of *Rabbi*, of such high importance among the Jewish people in our Saviour’s time, and to this day, might be thought sufficient to settle the point.

⁴ ‘God hath highly exalted him,’ Philip. ii. 8. 9. ‘Sat down on the right hand, τῆς μεγαλωσύνης, (our word *rabbe*) of the majesty on high, Heb. i. 3.

the various parts of this general character, to carry it up as high as the full extent of the original words will go, because it is designed to introduce what I called the beautiful description that follows, through all the particulars of head, locks, eyes, cheeks, lips, hands, belly, legs, countenance, mouth, where the several comparisons, even in our translation, cannot fail to excite in our minds very pleasing ideas, tho' many times not easy to be expressed by us with that propriety which the inspired writer had perceived in them¹. It is easy to see, that they are

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¹ There are some of them which seem to carry a grander meaning than our translation offers. I shall instance in one, ch. v. 12. 'His eyes—fitly set,' יִשְׁבּוּת עַל מְלָאָה, *ishbuth ol melae*, Heb. 'sitting in fulness,' as on our margins, tho' the illustration that follows has no foundation. The LXX. have it, καθήμεναι ἐπὶ πληρώματα, Montanus, manentes super plenitudinem. 'The earth is the Lord's, and (*melae*, our word), the fulness thereof,' Ps. l. 11. lxxxix. 12. Jer. xlvii. 2. Ezek. xix. 7, &c. in all which places the Gr. is πληρωμα. His eyes are over this fulness, (the LXX. render our word plural), beholding all things in heaven and earth. There is likewise another πληρωμα, 'fulness,' belonging to him — 'the fulness of the Godhead bodily,' Colos. i. 19, and ii. 9. 'the fulness of Christ,' Eph. iv. 13. 'of his fulness we have all received,' St John i. 16, &c. And here let me be indulged a short digression, to bring forward an observation, which this word *pleroma* had long ago led me to make. There was a mighty objection boasted of in the end of the 17th century by the Huguenot Daillé, and others of that stamp, against the Medicean copy of St Ignatius' Epistles, from its mentioning the word σιγη, *sige*; (λογος αὐδης ουκ απο σιγης προελθων, Ep. ad Magnesios), which word, say the objectors, was first used by the Valentinians, who were posterior to Ignatius. In answer to which, it has been demonstrated by Bishop Pearson and others, that *sige* had been used to the same purpose by the Gnostics before Ignatius. But whether so or not, the objection, such as it is, will hold equally against the genuineness of many places

intended to present to us the idea of one beautiful and 'altogether lovely'—whole. And as to what that whole is, I hope I may produce St Paul as a competent expositor², 'A body hast thou prepared me.' It needs no proof that this noble passage is a quotation from the 40th Psalm, which, as far at least as the quotation goes, is confessed to belong exclusively to the Messiah, our fair one's Beloved³.

Of

places of the New Testament, for making so frequent mention of the word *pleroma*, which is more conspicuous in, as being the foundation of, the Valentinian theology, than the Ignatian *sige*. It might have been more rationally supposed, that these wretches had borrowed both these words, as well as their other capital word *αιων, αων*, from antecedent writers, and adapted them to their own whimsical system of heretical nonsense.

¹ Ver. 16.

² Hebrews x. 5.

³ Though in the part I have produced from the apostle, there is a visible difference between it and its parallel in the Psalm, which could be accounted for from Exod. xxi. 5, 6, it is enough for my purpose, that I have St Paul's authority to warrant this turn of the LXX. and thereby give it to the church as the Psalmist's meaning. This 'prepared body' of Christ, I think is pointed at in another Psalm, which has not been usually thought to look that way, Psalm cxxxix. 13—16. 'I will give thanks unto thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made—my bones are not hid from thee, though I be made secretly, and fashioned beneath in the earth: Thine eyes did see my substance yet being imperfect, and in thy book were all my members written.' Psalm xl. 10. 'Which day by day were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them'—(Prayer Book translation). Indeed there are sundry other strokes in this Psalm, which, as well as these, seem to stretch beyond the natural David, and to indicate even a greater favourite than he was. 'My down-sitting and mine uprising.' 'My burial and (resurrectionem meam, Jerom), my resurrection.' Psalm iv. 8. xvi. 10. 'Thou hast fashioned me behind and before, אָחֶר וּקְדָם, *abur veqdam*, ὀπίσταντες καὶ ἀρχαίαν, LXX. backward and forward, formerly and futrely, the

Of this *body*, made up and prepared, with the constituent members here enumerated with high commendation, we know the design, and are happy in it. 'We are sanctified through the offering of the 'body of Jesus'. His body therefore was an offering; and there are repeated injunctions in the Levitical dispensation, that the offering, bullock, or lamb, or kid, the types of the great offering, should be without blemish². In conformity to which, we find the inspired writers of the New Testament always declaring, and with a certain degree of emphasis, the archetypal offering to be without spot or blemish; and it appears a most natural conclusion, that such a declaration in general, in emblematical adjustment to the Levitical rule, is the sum of all the fine encomiums here put into the church's mouth, by adducing such things as then were

'the first and the last.' Isaiah xli. 4. xliv. 6. xlviii. 12. applied Rev. i. 17. xxi. 6. 'the beginning and the end,' xxii. 13. 'the last Adam,' 1 Cor. xv. 45. 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,' Heb. xiii. 8. 'who is, and who was, and who is to come,' Rev. i. 8. 'from everlasting (answering to *qdam*) to everlasting (*abur*) thou art 'God,' Psalm xc. 2. 'laid thine hands upon me,' Psalm lxxx. 17. 'let 'thine hand be upon—the Son of Man,' for the same purpose in both, 'thou hast possessed my reins,' ver. 13. קניב, *qnib*, spoken of herself by wisdom personifying Christ, Prov. viii. 22. 'Jehovah possessed me' (קניי, *qnni*) *qdm*, before his works of old; where it is observable, that in the Psalm, the LXX. have properly translated *qnib*, ἐκτισέν με, from καταρμαί, 'to possess; but in Proverbs have rendered *qnni*, ἐκτίσας με, from κτίσας, 'to create,' he created me, which was greedily laid hold of by the old Arians, who knew little of the Hebrew language.

¹ Heb. x. 10.

² See particularly Lev. xxii, 20—25,

were, and still are, of precious estimation, ‘ fine
 ‘ gold, beds of spices, towers of perfumes, beryls
 ‘ and sapphires, ivory and marble,’ and then sum-
 ming up all with this rapturous exclamation, *he is*
altogether lovely, כלוֹ מְחַמְדִּים, *kelu mechamdīm*, totum
 ejus desiderabilia, ‘ the whole of him desireable,’
 ‘ ολῶ ἐπιθυμία, LXX. ‘ the desire of all nations,’ ‘ fair-
 er than the children of men,’ as the Psalmist de-
 scribes him¹, and as an old legend makes Pilate, or
 Publius Lentulus, describe him, in a letter to the
 Emperor Tiberius concerning him. I know there
 is a passage in Isaiah, that seems to deny the *perso-*
nal beauty of Jesus², ‘ There is no beauty (מְדֹאָה, *me-*
 ‘ *rae*, the word for ‘ countenance’ in our 15th verse)
 ‘ that we should desire him.’ But this may be only
 the opinion of the unbelievers, of whom the prophet
 very justly complains, and could be shewn not to
 militate against the church’s view of him, as agree-
 able to the picture before us, that *he is altogether*
lovely. Well might she boast of him³, as she
 does, and as every christian may joyfully join with
 her—‘ *THIS is my Beloved, and this is my friend, O*
daughters of Jerusalem !’

¹ Psalm xlv.

² Chap. liii. 2.

³ Psalm xlv. 8.

CHAP. VI.

VER. 1.—*Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? Whither is thy Beloved turned aside, that we may seek him with thee?*

THIS corresponds exactly with Haggai's 'desire of all nations',¹ and with Malachi's 'Lord whom ye seek',² realized in some sort, first by the parents of Jesus seeking him,³ and afterwards more generally, when the apostles said to him,⁴ 'All men seek thee.'

VER. 2.—*My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.*

How came she to the knowledge of this? She had been wistfully seeking and enquiring about him; but, as far as appears, had got no intelligence. The literal sense here points out no sort of direction. But the spiritual, the real sense, leads to faith and hope, and gives them for instructors. The
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¹ Chap. ii. 7.

³ St Luke ii. 44—48.

² Chap. iii. 1.

⁴ St Mark i. 37.

account given of this employment has been explained already. I shall only observe now, that he is here said to have *gone down*, ירד, *ird*, which I would think relative to his incarnation, as pointed to under the same word in other places'. 'Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and ירד, *tard*, come down'² — 'O that thou wouldst rent the heavens, and ירדה, *irdth*, come down'³.

VER. 4.—*Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.*

Here we meet with the Beloved again, whether in the garden or not, is not material, all full, as usual, of love and complacency, without the least symptom of upbraiding for former neglect, which I much question if any heathen songster would have omitted; but introducing himself as if he had experienced no unkindness, with one of the most engaging addresses that language almost could furnish. *Beautiful as Tirzah*.—We read⁴ of a city of this name, which was the residence of Jeroboam, and the metropolis of the kingdom of Israel, till Samaria was built. What it was in Solomon's time we know not; but it is not likely, that in complimenting his fair

¹ Psalm cxliv. 5.

² Isaiah lxiv. 1.

³ Where any verses are now omitted, the reader will observe that they have been noticed before.

⁴ 1 Kings xiv. 17.

fair one, he would have put it, or indeed any city whatever, on an equal footing with his favourite Jerusalem, which was so far superior to all the cities of the land, perhaps, at that time, of the whole earth. The LXX. have done well here, and given both a just and instructive rendering of this *Tirzah*, *Καλὴ αὖς Εὐδοκία*. The word is a Heemantic derivative from the verb *רצה*, *reze*, 'voluit,' or 'beneplacuit,' and always carries the idea of good will, good liking, complacency, and acceptance, and is mostly predicated of God through the Old Testament, as its corresponding Greek, *εὐδοκεῖω*, is in the New. And the comparing these two capital words of our revelation-system, as mutually explaining one another, will not only illustrate the simile before us, but likewise point out some clear traces of the happy connexion that subsists between the two constituent parts of that gracious system¹. In addition to the quotations below, I shall only farther mention what is recorded by the Psalmist, and applied by the apostle², 'I come to do, *רצוני*, *rezunka*,
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¹ Thus Exod. xxviii. 38. 'that they may be (*לרצון*, *lerexun*) accepted before the Lord,' Levit. i. 4. 'it shall be (*נרצה*, *nerexe*) accepted for him to be his atonement,' and in many other places in Leviticus to the same purpose. Deut. xxxiii. 16. 'the good will (*rexun*) of him that dwelt in the bush.' Ver. 23. 'Naphtali satisfied with (*rexun*) favour.'—(Compare Isaiah ix. 1. St Matth. iv. 15). 2 Sam. xxiv. 23. 'the Lord thy God (*irexe*) accept thee.' Isaiah lxi. 2. (applied by our Saviour to himself, St Luke iv. 21.) 'the (*rexun*) acceptable year of the Lord.' Haggai i. 8. 'build the house, and (*arexe*, *אֶרְכָּשָׁה*), I will take pleasure in it.'

² Psalm xl 7. 8. Heb. x. 9.

‘thy will, O God.’ In fulfilment of which typical prediction, it is remarkable how repeatedly, in the days of his flesh, he puts his people in mind, that he was come to do the will of him that sent him. What that will was, St Paul tells us, where he says, ‘that by it we are sanctified, through the offering ‘of the body of Jesus Christ once for all’;’ a business much more arduous in its nature, and more extensive in its design, than what we mean by doing ‘the will of God,’ as signifying what we call ‘keeping his commandments’.² The corresponding word, *εὐδοκία*, which the LXX. here present to our notice, will be found, upon examination, to carry the same grand idea that *rezun* does, and therefore deserves our most serious attention. ‘My beloved Son, *ἐν ᾧ εὐδοκήσα*, in whom I (have been) am ‘(and will be) well pleased,’ is a well known, but perhaps not fully understood, or not properly applied passage. There is a text in the same evangelist³, which will be a key to us, ‘Behold my servant, whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom ‘my soul (*נַפְשִׁי*, *rezthe*, Isa. *εὐδοκήσε*, Matth.) is well ‘pleased.’ The ‘Beloved,’ in the last clause here, is certainly the same with the chosen ‘servant’ in the first. *Obd* in Isaiah, *παῖς* in Matthew, and Matthew’s application of it to Christ with the word

¹ Heb. x. 10.

² I would ask here, whether the third petition in the Lord’s Prayer may not have a look towards this cardinal point of the christian’s compass, for direction both in faith and practice?

³ St Matth. xii. 18. quoting Isaiah xlii. 1.

word *ευδοκησε*, which the LXX. here have not, clears up what it is that the baptismal voice points to, even under the word *‘υιου*, the *παις αγαπητου*, beloved servant¹, which, by the bye, will not well apply to Deity. That passage of St Paul, which I have so often quoted, will be of use here to shew us the full force of this notable word. ‘ Sacrifice and offering, *ουκ ηθελησας*, thou wouldst not.—In burnt-offerings, *ουκ ευδοκησας*, thou hadst no pleasure. Sacrifices, &c. *εκ ηθελησας*, *υδε ευδοκησας*, thou wouldst not, ‘ neither hadst pleasure therein.’ He joins these two together, and in what sense he does so, we learn from himself in another place, where he says², ‘ *κατα την ευδοκίαν τῆς θεληματὸς*, according to the good ‘ pleasure of his will.’ And again³, ‘ *μυστήριον τῆς θεληματὸς* *κατα την ευδοκίαν*, the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure.’ Our apostle, in one place, takes this word to himself in a most fervent and affectionate manner⁴, ‘ *ἡ μὲν ευδοκία τῆς καρδίας μου*, my heart’s desire,’ one of the warmest expressions that our language furnishes. In this sense, therefore, the meaning of his negative argumentation⁵ will be, that the sacrifices he alludes to, tho’ of divine institution, and on that account necessary for a while, yet were not the *ευδοκία*, the acceptance; good pleasure or heart’s desire; but that the *ευδοκία* was the *σῶμα κατηρτισμένον*, the prepared body; and

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that

¹ See St. Matth. viii. 6. 8. 13. *παις*, servant.

² Ephes. i. 5.

³ Ver. 9.

⁴ Rom. xviii. 1.

⁵ Heb. x.

that the *Θελημα*, the will, done by him who came, was *προσφορά σωματος*, the offering that body. This opens up a vast extent of meaning, beyond the ordinary idea of ‘pleasing or being pleased,’ in our common application of it to one another, or even to God, which is for the most part expressed by the verb *αρεσκων*, as the Concordances will discover. Indeed this blessed New-Testament word, where it is spoken of Deity, as it mostly is, seems always to have an aspect to the incarnation, either as typified by prefatory preludes, or as actually accomplished: And for want of carrying this extensive idea along with us, we lose much of that comfort which this significant word is designed to convey to us. For instance, in the baptismal voice, ‘in whom ‘I am well pleased,’ not barely declaring his being well pleased with, or fond of his Son, which, though most certainly true, is couched in the *αγαπητος*, beloved, but in the same sense with what I may call St Paul’s commentary¹, ‘God in Christ reconciling ‘the world to himself.’ Thus we read² of Jesus saying, ‘Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in ‘thy sight;’ which, though in so far just, is not expressive enough; for literally it is, ‘so was the ‘*ευδοκια* before thee. So where St Paul says³, ‘It ‘is God who worketh in you, *υπερ της ευδοκίας*,’ we put in ‘his,’ and read it ‘of his good pleasure,’ which has been construed to signify his absolute sovereignty,

¹ 2 Cor. v. 19.

² St Matth. xi. 26.

³ Philip. ii. 13.

ty, in support of the darling tenet of the Calvinistic school, but literally it means, because of, or on account of, or for the sake of the *ευδοκία*. Again, St Paul says, 'For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell'. So we read it, with what I have no scruple to call, too bold an insertion, 'the Father,' which has a tendency towards the Arian scheme of inferiority. The apostle's words are, 'Ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ εὐδοκῆσεν πᾶν τὸ πληρωμα κατοικῆσαι,' 'the whole fulness was pleased to dwell in him,' as he explains himself more at large in the next chapter², 'In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead 'bodily.' And in the great angelic hymn³, 'Glo-
'ry to God in the highest, and on earth peace, *ευδοκία ἐν ἀνθρώποις*, good will towards men;' which, by the connexion of the words, and position of the copulative, may be (I had almost said, should be) rendered, 'The *ευδοκία* among men (like St John's 'ἐσκηνώσεν ἐν ἡμῖν) dwelt among us'⁴, is glory to God; 'and peace to earth.'

Such and so grand is this word which the LXX. have justly found corresponding with the *Tirzah*, which the Beloved here applies to his fair one, *Thou art beautiful, O my love, ὡς εὐδοκία*, as the 'good pleasure,' which, from what I have now said, will appear to the church the most beautiful re-
semblance

¹ Col. i. 19.

² Ver. 9.

³ St Luke ii. 13.

⁴ Chap. i. 14.

semblance that she could wish for. And here I shall only offer one observation, for which indeed, on the literal plan of interpreting the Song, there is no ground, but which in the spiritual sense, and according to my explanation, will appear to be both natural and useful. The church, we see, on her recovery from her lethargic indifference towards her Beloved, had been expressing in high terms of praise her admiration of the various members which go to the composition of a body—of that body, which was prepared to be the ‘offering of her sanctification.’ He who is always present with his church, and hears the most secret strains of her affectionate praise, takes up the tune on her own key, and ushers in his rapturous commendation with reminding her, that her connexion with the object of her admiration is the source of all the beauty she is possessed of—of that beauty which ‘the king has such pleasure in.’ I hope there is no harm in drawing every possible inference, however far-fetched, in some people’s eyes, to magnify the riches of divine grace, and the wonderful condescension of the Beloved: And under that shelter let this observation pass.

Comely as Jerusalem.—This is both lofty and plain. ‘Very excellent things are spoken of thee; thou city of God.’ ‘The joy of the whole earth;

* Psalm xlv. 12. *יפה*, *yep*, the same word for beauty in both places.

* Psalm lxxxvii. 3.

‘earth, the city of the great king’¹. ‘Jerusalem, a city at unity within itself’². Jerusalem which is ‘above is free, which is the mother of us all’³. ‘Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem’⁴. These encomiums of the Psalmist, and the typical accommodation of the apostle, will both illustrate and justify this branch of description, which is particularly explained, and, as it were, referred to in the Apocalypse’s vision⁵ of ‘the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.’ St John had read of a bride likened to a Jerusalem; he now sees a Jerusalem likened to a bride. There is heavenly direction acknowledged in the one case; why not in the other? The comparisons, however strange, are parallel, and seem to bespeak the same author. *Terrible as an army with banners*.—This phrase occurs again, and shall be afterwards considered.

VER.

¹ Psalm xlviii. 2.² Psalm cxxii. throughout.³ Galat. iv. 26.⁴ Heb. xii. 22.⁵ Rev. xxi. 2.

VER. 8.—*There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number.*

VER. 9.—*My dove, my undefiled, is but one, she is the only one of her mother ; she is the choice one of her that bare her ; the daughters saw her, and blessed her ; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.*

Much curious enquiry has been employed to find out the time when Solomon could speak thus of himself, as we read that he once had a thousand such as are here described. All the abettors of the literal plan assign this number to him as his property; and a late writer, on this plan, gives us, in his paraphrase, this explanatory enlargement, ‘In my palace, the spoils of war in my father’s time, the purchase of my treasure, or fallen to me as my regal inheritance.’ But there is nothing in the text that either requires or countenances such an explanation. It seems to be the favourite style with Solomon, to say, in the words of Agur¹, ‘There are three things—yea four;’ and the construction is the same as here. *Shashim* חַשִּׁים, *eme*, in the Song, *Shalish* חַלִּישׁ, *eme*, in the Proverbs. The prophet Amos, long after this, uses the same style, ‘For three transgressions, and for four².’ Our old way of numeration by scores, which our translators generally adopt, keeps up the similarity.

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¹ Prov. xxx. 15. 18. 21. 29.

² Ch. i. 3. 6. 9. xi. 13. Chap. ii. 1. 4. 6.

There is something in what our Saviour says to his disciples¹, that will help to explain the indefinite nature of the phrase, and seems to have much the same view. ‘Blessed are the eyes which see the things which ye see; for I tell you that *many* prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see,’ &c. Or, if this shall be thought too distant, we have a nearer analogy, where it is said², ‘Kings’ daughters among thine honourable women; upon thy right hand standeth the queen³,’ ‘the virgins that follow her—with joy and gladness shall enter into the king’s palace.’ So were not there before, ‘as spoils of war,’ but attendants on the queen; which can admit a spiritual interpretation, as consistently, more so indeed, as a natural one.

My dove, my undefiled, is one. As the words stand—*One is my dove, my undefiled.* *Undefiled* is too weak, and in this position rather harsh. It is תמי, *tamti*, from *tam*, or *tamim*, ‘perfect,’ τέλει μὲν, LXX. *perfecta mea*, ‘my perfect one;’ which conveys a higher idea than the negative *undefiled* does. ‘Be ye perfect⁴,’ &c. In application of all this to the church, there is little difficulty, and a great deal of congruity; and the whole seems to be summed up in that beautiful panegyric on a good wife, which, though pertinent enough in that sense,

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¹ St Luke x. 23, 24.² Psalm xlv. 9.³ Psalm xlv. 14. 15.⁴ St Matth v. 48.

is equally suitable, if not more so, to the spouse of the Song', 'Her children rise up and call her 'blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her; 'many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.' But the striking feature of the picture is the unity or oneness, so much insisted on²; from which the inference is easy, that one only is, or can be, the spouse of Christ; and that the queens and concubines, however virtuous or fair, the various forms of religion, and religious or philosophic sects, have no title to this dignity. They are indeed brought in here, admiring and praising the *One Dove*, the perfect one of her Beloved, contrary to subsequent experience, which has seen her not only openly persecuted by avowed enemies, but even, in these latter times, slighted and trampled on by false friends, and pierced through with deepest sorrow for the intended, but impotent, indignities put upon the Beloved of her soul. • How long, O Lord, holy and true³!

VER. 10.—*Who is she, that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners?*

Of all the charming strokes of poetic imagery to be met with in this admirable poem, the description here before us is the most finely picturesque. The
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² Prov. xxxi. 28, 29.

² Psalm: cxvii. 3.

³ Rev. vi. 10.

paraphraser I have so often quoted, while he puts this question into the mouths of the queens and concubines, praising her, 'when first she appeared among them, and saying, *Who is she, &c.*' in a note at the foot of the page, gives us a spiritual explanation, which he borrows from Dr Gill, 'Of the morning, moon, and sun, as referring to the three states of the church, the patriarchal, the dawn, the law, a light reflected, the gospel, the sun of righteousness.' This is certainly a just observation; and if the Song is to be spiritually explained in this part, why not through the whole? The three states, or three ages of the church, are a division of Jewish original, as comprehending the several periods before the law, under the law, and in the age of Messiah; to each of which, their doctors, before Christ, assigned two thousand years of duration; but since his time, out of their inveterate aversion to christianity, they have given up that calculation, as inconsistent with their prejudices about the Messiah, and are now in a chaotic state, having neither the moon of the law, nor the sun of the gospel among them. The writer of the Song was a Jew, and would know the morning-state by family tradition, and the moon-state by personal acquaintance: And though he had not been so divinely taught as we believe he was, he could, from Moses, and from his father David, discover the future clearness under the promised prophet, 'the

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‘ great one, who was to be a light to the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel ’; ‘ to the intent, that unto principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be made known by the church, the manifold (πολυποικιλῶς, variegated) wisdom of God ’. It would be an agreeable employment to examine the distinct epithets assigned to these three states : But, when the general point of application is ascertained, such particulars will readily occur to any one who may think it worth his while to make the trial,

Terrible as an army with banners.—This is another of those bold figures which exclude the literal sense altogether, as no stretch of accommodation can adjust it to the beauty and comeliness in the preceding, or to the fairness and clearness in this present verse. *As an army.*—*Army* is not in the text, and is superfluous. The text is אִיסָה כְּנִדְגָלֹת, *aime kenedgluth*, θαμβῶς ὡς τεταγμεναι, LXX. *terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata*, Jerom. The τεταγμεναι of the LXX. is a most expressive rendering; and in the 2d chapter of Numbers, the great key of interpretation here, they always render the same word for ‘ standard ’ or ‘ banner,’ by ταγμα, from which use of the word, we have our phrase ‘ military tactics.’ This very word we find applied to the first christian church of the Gentiles¹—‘ as many as were, τεταγμενοι, ordained.’ Our translation

¹ St Luke ii. 32.

² Ephes. iii. 10.

³ Acts xiii. 48.

tion of the passage, ‘ as many as were ordained ‘ to eternal life believed,’ is brought forward to countenance that side of the question, about the extent of redemption, which the Calvinistic school has espoused; and it is surprising, that both Jerom and Pagninus make it *præ-ordinati*, fore-ordained. There is no such idea in the word itself; and from the peculiar order of the grammatical construction, which is frequent in the Greek idiom, it might as properly be read, ‘ As many as were, *τεταγμενοι*, ordained, ‘ *ordinati*, (not in the ‘ sense of decreeing, much less fore-decreeing, but) ‘ ordered, ranked, or disposed, believed unto eternal life:’ Which is consonant to the whole tenor of gospel-language, and more agreeable to the particular context on that remarkable occasion¹. Under this idea of order, rank, or regularity, under the banner of her Beloved, the spouse here is said to be *terrible*, the invariable meaning of the Hebrew *אִימָה*, *aimeh*, which the note above-mentioned says, may be referred to the ‘ coming with Christ at the ‘ last day,’ when, as our Saviour said in person to the then church², ‘ She shall sit upon thrones, judging the tribes of Israel;’ and according to St Paul’s declaration³, ‘ Know ye not that *we* shall judge

¹ St Luke will explain himself, where he says, in the 1st chapter of his gospel, ver. 8. ‘ In the order, *ἐν τῇ τάξει*, of his course; and St Paul, much to the same purpose, 1 Cor. xiv. 40. ‘ Let all things be done, *κατὰ τάξιν*, according to order;’ as he had told them before, xi. 34. ‘ The rest will I, *διατάξωμαι*, set in order; and, more appositely, 1 Cor. xv. 23. ‘ Every one, *ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ ταγματί*, in his own proper rank.’

² St Matth. xix. 28.

³ 1 Cor. vi. 3.

‘judge angels?’ Allusive to this may be that of the Psalmist¹, ‘in the name of our God, we will ‘set up our banners,’ or ‘triumph,’ as it is in the Prayer-Book translation. But even before this truly triumphant state of the church, the awful epithet of ‘terrible’ will be found to belong to her in what is called her militant state, when we consider the high powers with which she is invested²— ‘Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound ‘in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on ‘earth, shall be loosed in heaven³.’ And these powers, as necessary to her very existence, we find very early claimed and exercised. Not to insist on miraculous strokes of terror, as of Peter on Ananias and Sapphira⁴, and of Paul on Elymas the sorcerer⁵, we find the same apostle judging and passing sentence on the incestuous offender⁶, ‘In the name ‘of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with his power, to ‘deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction ‘of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the ‘day of the Lord.’ And we find him telling Timothy what he had done to Hymeneus and Alexander, ‘whom,’ he says, ‘I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.’ To such, therefore, as have a due sense of the blessings to be obtained in the unity of the church,

and

¹ Psalm xx. 5.² St Matth. xviii. 18.³ Repeated and explained St. John xx. 23.⁴ Acts v.⁵ Acts xiii.⁶ 1 Cor. v. 4. 5.⁷ 1 Tim. i. 20.

and are terrified at the thoughts of losing them ; and such must be the awful sense of this matter entertained by every christian who values his character, the church will certainly appear thus far 'terrible,' in the disagreeable, though often necessary, exercise of her powers, and in wielding that rod, with which St Paul threatens the Corinthians*. But let her take this along with her, that she is only terrible as here described, *ως τεταργμενη*, when drawn up in due order, under the banner of her captain, and acting in his name, by his authority, and according to his injunctions : Remembering still her own experimental description of the banner in which she glories, 'His banner over me 'was love ;' and keeping in view that part of character which the Psalmist attributes to *Adoni Jah**, 'There is mercy with thee, therefore thou shalt be 'feared.'

VER. 11.—*I went down to the garden of nuts, to see the fruits of the valley, whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded.*

There is sufficient ground, both from connexion and the form of expression here, to continue the Beloved as speaker, though both Jerom and the late paraphrast assign it to the spouse, without any possibility of either explication or application. In the mouth of the Beloved, there is an appearance

* 1 Cor. iv. 21.

* Psalm cxxx. 4.

ance of propriety, though not so clear, as in some of the former parts. *Garden of nuts*.—The word for *nuts* is אגוז, *aguz*, singular, and is found only here. We meet with *nuts* in one other place¹, where the word is בִּתְנִים, *bethnim*, plural. Our present word therefore, *aguz*, may, like the *aphriun* and *thalpiuth*, which have occurred already, be a ‘pro re nata’ word of the Poet’s own invention, for some mystical meaning, to be sought for by its derivation. Now there is a simple root, גז, or גזז, *gaz*, or *gazz*, the most frequent sense of which is, ‘to shave,’ ‘to shear sheep;’ and so our word from this root, with the passive ו, and * of the future, as some other nouns are formed, may signify ‘tondendus, to be shorn (descendi in hortum tondendus); and the evangelical prophet will point out the application—‘As a sheep before the shearers, *gazzi*, is ‘dumb’;’ which was the passage that converted the Ethiopian nobleman. I am aware of an objection against this forced-like interpretation, from the word for *garden* being, what grammarians call, in regimine, גנח, *ganth*, so not admitting the Latin turn which I have given to it. But this can be easily solved, by changing the participle into a participial noun, ‘descendi in hortum tonsionis, *I went down to the garden of shearing*; which keeps up the idea, and is no way repugnant to the genius of the language—*To see the fruits of the valley*.—Not very likely, one should think, to be found in a garden,

¹ Gen. xliii. 11.—Nuts and almonds.

² Isaiah liii. 7.

den, nor applicable to the vine and pomegranate. The word for *valley*, (for which, in the strict sense of *valley*, there is another word, פֶּגֶז, *omq*'), is נַחַל, *nahl*, which is sometimes rendered 'brook,' as the LXX. have rendered it here, τὸ χυμάρου; and in this sense may be explained by another place of scripture, (the best explainer of itself)², 'He shall drink, ἐκ χυμάρου, of the brook in the way,' undeniably predicated of the Beloved. But the most frequent rendering of *nahl* is 'inheritance;' and that too in a sacred sense, as belonging to, or connected with God³. The word for *fruits*, אֲבִי, *abi*, occurs only here, and in the book of Job⁴, where it is *abu*, his greenness, as in vegetation; so it was to see the verdure of the inheritance that he came down, according to what is said by Isaiah⁵, 'He shall see of the travail of his soul,' &c.—'if the vine flourisheth.' The church is often represented under this symbol⁶. 'Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt,' and⁷,⁸ behold and visit this vine.' 'He planted his vineyard with the choicest vine⁹.' Lay all these detached passages together, and it will follow of course, that his going down into his humanity-state may have been adumbrated under these figures: And the same may be said of the next verse, which seems to have a particular connexion with this one.

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¹ See above, ch. ii. 1.² Psalm cx. 7.³ Psalm ii. 8. xxviii. 9. lxxiv. 2. lxxix. 1, &c. ⁴ Ch. viii. 12.⁵ Chap. liii. 11.⁶ Psalm lxxx. 8.⁷ Ver. 14.⁸ Isaiah v. 2.

VER. 12.—*Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib.*

Literally, *I did not know, my soul placed me the chariots of Amminadib.* How to make out a regular chain of interpretation from this literal translation, is not an easy matter. Yet, the principal words, when analysed and compared, may lead to some pious meditation, which the mind may conceive, but cannot properly express. The key-word, as we may call it, is עמינדיב, *omminadib*, of which the LXX. Jerom, and our translators, have made a proper name, Amminadib, and our marginal rendering, which is generally the best, calls it, ‘my willing people.’ The noun נדב, *nadab*, is of extensive import, and signifies ‘willing, free, liberal, generous,’ much to the full meaning of the Latin, ‘generosus.’ We find it made an epithet of the divine spirit, ‘Stablish me with thy free spirit,’ which the LXX. have rendered ἡ/εμμουαω, and Jerom, to the same sense, ‘principali—thy ruling princely spirit.’ Joined, as here, with עם, *om*, people, we meet with it very early in that famous Song of Deborah², and great stress laid upon it. ‘The people willingly offered themselves, the governors of Israel offered themselves willingly among the people,’ אתנדיב עם, *ethenedib om*, ἐκαστος αὐθιγαὶ λαόν, LXX. sponte, propria voluntate, obtulistis vos, Jerom. The occasion was solemn; and had been perilous, and

² Psalm li. 12.

² Judges v. 2. 9.

and the muse makes this act of the ‘willing people,’ a fit theme for praising and blessing the Lord. We find it next promised to Christ¹, ‘Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,’ which the Prayer-Book elegantly paraphrases, ‘shall offer thee freewill offerings in the day of thy power.’ Indeed there is no trait of character more insisted on, or more commended in scripture-style, than this of ‘willingness,’ as implied in the Hebrew *nadib*; and nothing more blamed and lamented than a contrary disposition. Witness the Beloved’s pathetic expostulation with his people², ‘How oft would I have gathered thy children together, *καὶ οὐκ ἠθελήσατε*, and ye would not!’ and at another time, his thus personally upbraiding them³, ‘Ye will not, *οὐ θέλετε*, are not willing to come to me, that ye might have life.’ The other leading word, as in some sort of connexion with *Amminadib*, is *chariots*, מִרְכָּבוֹת, *merkbuth*, from *rehb*, to ride, a word frequent in scripture, in the literal sense, and even applied to God⁴, and peculiarly to Christ⁵, ‘Ride on, because of the word of truth,’ &c.; and, as the structure of that wonderful song of Habakkuk points the application, ‘that thou didst ride upon thy horses, and thy chariots of salvation’⁶.

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¹ Psalm cx. 3.² St Matth. xxiii. 37.³ St John v. 40.⁴ Ps. xviii. 11. lxviii. 5. xviii. 34.⁵ Psalm xlv. 5.⁶ Ch. iii. 8.

*My soul made me like—*placed me, נָשָׂא, *nephshi*, my soul, the affections, emotions, desires of the heart, of the whole frame, and which, from the connexion here, may pass for a counterpart to the fair one's repeated appellation, *him whom my soul loveth*. Something like this was predicted of him¹, where the prophet speaks of his 'making his soul 'an offering for sin,' and² 'pouring out his soul unto death;' and which was realized, when he said³, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.'

*Or ever I was aware—*לֹא יָדַעְתִּי, *la idothi*, ουκ εγινωκ, LXX. nescivi, Jerom, 'I did not know.' What we are to make of this I cannot say, unless, upon the footing of the explication I am offering, we may be allowed to refer it literally to the childhood of his humanity-state, as if meaning to express, that the ardency of his soul was not the mere result of deliberative knowledge, or of that wisdom in which he advanced as well as in stature⁴, but was congenial with it, and originally impressed upon it; as he had before said by the pen of his type David, 'Thy law is within my heart,' (marg. 'in the midst of my bowels'). Now, let us put all this together; and, though we should not be able to fix any particular point of application, there will appear in general a hearty desire (it is the Belov-
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¹ Isaiah liii. 10.

² Ver. 12.

³ St Matth. xxvi. 38.

⁴ St Luke ii. 52.

⁵ Psalm xl. 8.

ed's own expression¹) to employ his 'chariots of salvation,' to the utmost extent of the prophet's bold metaphor, for the benefit of his people, whose wills his powerful grace has inclined to the obedience of the gospel; and even, as it were, to assign them over to his 'willing people,' to be reckoned, in a manner, their property. 'Work out, *την ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίαν*, vestrum ipsorum salutem, your own salvation:' 'For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do.'

VER. 13.—*Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? as it were the company of two armies.*

This seems to be a sudden unconnected start, as we might call it, of poetic rapture; and there are many such, which have their meaning within themselves, independent, in a great measure, on the context. It is needless to be enquiring who was the speaker here, or whither the fair one was going when she was thus addressed. *Return, O Shulamite*, *השילמית*, a beautiful inflection from *Solomon*, given to the church, under the feminine termination as a woman, the name of Solomon, like 'christian' from Christ. 'To him that overcometh will I give a new name written'²—'I will write upon him my new name'³. And happy were it for the

¹ St Luke xxii. 15.

² Rev. ii. 17.

³ Chap. iii. 12.

the church; both in her collective and individual capacity, if she carefully and constantly remembered her being the *Shulamite*, the favourite of her Solomon, and were thereby induced to act up to the full import of that name, in compliance with, and as the effect of, the precious legacy which he bequeathed to her, when he said, 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.'

Return that we may see thee.—So the church may be seen, consequently must be a visible church. And some particulars are visible too about her. *As it were a company of two armies*, כְּמַחֲלֵי מַחֲנִים, *kemehalt mahanim*. This rendering of ours, *two armies*, would seem to point to the trite distinction of church 'militant and triumphant.' But *two* is not in the text, and added only on the fancy of a dual number in Hebrew, as there is in Greek. Thus in Genesis¹, where we first meet with the word *mahanim*, we read it *mahanaim*, and on the margin have translated it 'two hosts, or camps;' though there might be found in the same chapter the numeral word for *two* added, *shani mahanuth*, 'two bands.' It was on a most solemn occasion, that old Jacob called a famous place by this name², 'The angels of God met him: And, when he saw them, he said, This is God's host, and he called the name of that place *Mahanim*'—not camps or hosts,

¹ St John xiv. 27.

² Chap. xxxii. 2.

³ Gen. xxxii. 1, 2.

hosts, neuter, but ‘ encampers,’ active ; in allusion to which, the Psalmist tells us¹, ‘ The angel of the Lord, *הַנֶּחֱמָה*, *haneh*, encampeth round about them that fear him.’ But this is not the first time that Jacob was blessed with such a vision: For long before this, when by his mother’s direction² he fled to Haran, for fear of his brother Esau, we read³, that ‘ at a certain place by the way, he saw in his sleep a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached unto heaven ; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending upon it.’ To which, I think, we may fairly presume that our Saviour looked back, when he said to Philip and Nathanael⁴, ‘ Hereafter ye shall see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.’ Here we have the same wonderful sight described in the same words, and consequently with the same view, pointing out the Son of Man as the ladder of communication between heaven and earth. It was at this time, and under the impression of this mysterious exhibition, with all the gracious circumstances attending it, that Jacob, on his awaking out of sleep, vowed that famous vow⁵ which has been so frequently and fervently recommended to general imitation, though one should think, not upon quite solid ground, either from the construction or nature

¹ Psalm xxxiv. 8.² Gen. xxvii. 43.³ Gen. xxviii. 12.⁴ St John i. 51.⁵ Gen. xxviii. 20, 21, 22.

nature of it, 'If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my Father's house in peace, *then* the Lord shall be my God.' Here we stop, and take this to be the matter of the vow, upon the conditions mentioned, which, by the alternative *if*, upon their failing, annulled the obligation of the vow. Is this consistent with Jacob's piety, or a pattern for us to follow, to be bargaining, as it were, with Jehovah? Indeed with such as think themselves of high enough rank to *covenant* with their Maker, such freedom of language might pass : But the humble christian will boggle at it, and be more inclined to adopt Joshua's unconditional resolution, 'As for me, and my house, we will serve Jehovah.' Besides this semblance of impropriety, it appears that, in these patriarchal times, vowing always implied a promise to give something to Jehovah ; as is plain from all the accounts we have of the practice, as well as from the frequent calls upon the people to *pay* their vows ; and is in fact the case in the present instance, tho' the too soon inserting the *then*, which there is no ground for in the original, keeps it out of sight. 'If God will be with me—' and if Jehovah will be my God, לִי יְהוָה, *li La-* 'leim, for Aleim, God to me, (Jacob knew well what that connexion meant), *then* this stone shall be God's house ; and of all that thou givest me, I
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‘will surely give the tenth unto thee.’ This shews the matter of the vow in its proper and true light’.

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¹ As this latter part of Jacob’s vow has been made much of in the long agitated controversy about tythes, it may not be amiss to offer here some scriptural observations upon that subject. We find that, at this time, Jehovah had made a donation to Jacob of a vast tract of country, (see the map of it Gen. xv. 18—21.), without the reservation of any part or portion, but all and whole in free gift to him, and his heirs for ever; and had further promised to be with him, and protect him in all his ways, v. 13, 14, 15. In grateful return for these undeserved favours, of which he always retained the most profound sense, Gen. xxxii. 10. xlviii. 15, 16. the patriarch binds and obliges himself to make full and frank cession of the *tenth* part back to the gracious donor, to be at his disposal in all time coming. So from this time, and by this deed, Jehovah, the original Lord of the land, became proprietor of the *tenth*; and could, by this newly acquired right, settle it in what way, and upon whom he pleased. Accordingly, when he had brought Jacob’s posterity out of Egypt, and after forty years trial of them in the wilderness, had settled them in the promised land, which he appointed to be divided among their several tribes by lot, he chose the tribe of Levi to himself, to be his Priests, in room of the first-born, and assigned to them, in that character, the *tenth*, which Jacob had given back, instead of the portion of land which would have fallen to them by lot. Now let it be remembered, that by the general disposition of things at that time, the tribe of Levi, now become the clergy-part of the nation, had an antecedent title to their twelfth share of the land, with all the profits arising from it, on the same footing with the rest of their brethren. Of all this their sacred destination denuded them; and it was not only reasonable, but even necessary, that some provision should be made for them, as an equivalent for their share of the ground, and a compensation for their public service. I do not mean to enter into the merits of this cause, but would only hint to, the christian clergy, who claim the *tenth* as of divine right, not to rest their claim on this old Levitical precedent, unless they could produce the same titles which, we see, the Levites in their lay-state had, to the greater part of what was thus allotted to them.

We read of another angelic interference that Jacob had¹, as to which, Moses says, that it was a 'man' that appeared to him, and wrestled with him. The prophet says it was an angel. The patriarch himself seems to have viewed the apparition in a higher light than either man or angel, in our common acceptance: 'I will not let thee go,' said he, 'except thou bless me; and he blessed him there'; and Jacob called the name of the place *Peni-al*, (the face of God), 'for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.' Which will account for, and vindicate, that strange-sounding expression in the 24th Psalm, 'This is the generation of them that seek thy face, O Jacob,' which the LXX. and Jerom turn into 'the face of the God of Jacob,' and our margin, 'thy face, O God of Jacob;' but which, from this Penial appearance, may be better expressed (as such apostrophes are frequent) by 'that face which thou, O Jacob, saw at Peni-al, and rejoiced in it. So true is the observation I have so often made, and indeed it cannot be made too often, about the self-interpreting sufficiency of the Bible. Now, as Jacob is acknowledged to have been a representative, and eminent type of the church, and as in that capacity he was blessed with these visions or sights of *Mahanim*, we may now find out the meaning and pertinency of the allusion before us,

¹ Gen. xxxii. 24—30, and explained Hosea xii. 4. 5.

² Compare Heb. vii. 7. 'the less is blessed of the greater.'

us, in the long-continued protection and support of the church, under the many pressures and dangers to which she has been exposed in general, and our own small portion of her in particular, to such a degree, indeed, that, according to a common phrase, there certainly is a *visible* hand of Providence in it. May we not observe too, that I may let no apparent beauty of this poem pass unnoticed, a striking analogy, or similarity of idea between the *dagluth*, ‘banners,’ in the 4th and 10th verses, and the *mahanim*, ‘encampers,’ here, both military terms, the one clothing her with terror—‘terrible as an army ‘with banners,’ the other making her a most delightful object to look at—*Return, O Shulamite, that we may look upon thee, with thy heavenly chorus of Mahanim about thee?*

CHAP. VII.

VER. 1.—*How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter? The joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman.*

In the first five verses of this chapter, we have a renewed panegyric on the fair one's beauty, drawn from several of the bodily members, which had not been brought into view before; and we find herself addressed under a new appellation, בַּת־נָדִיב, *bath-nadib*, *prince's daughter*, which has been offered as a proof of her being the Egyptian bride, or Pharaoh's daughter. But *prince*, in this sense, is not the proper sense of *nadib*, as I have shewn already; and the title here may have a reference, a very apparent one indeed, to the *Ami-nadib*, the willing people above-mentioned. ‘*How beautiful thy feet*, פַּעֲמֶיךָ, *pomik*, not the substance of the real members, for which the proper word is רַגְלִי, *regli*, but διαβηματα, LXX. *gressus*, Jerom, ‘the steps of the feet ‘in motion,’ whence it is often used to denote times—repetition of so many times, like the regular

lar beating of hands or feet in music. *With shoes,* בִּנְעָלִים, *benolim*; this part of dress, though now common, and even vulgar, among us, was of more honour and distinction in these old times, and seems to have peculiarly belonged to such as came under the appellation given to the spouse here, to the *nadibim*, the *ingenui*, to ‘gentlemen,’ as we might say, and their connexions. Moses makes them a part of the patriarch Asher’s blessing¹. Ezekiel speaks of them as one of the marks of honour conferred on the poor outcast foundling²; as St Luke does on the returning prodigal³. And as wearing them was an ornament of dignity, so putting them off was an act of humility and veneration, not from superstitious invention, but from divine command⁴. St Paul will give us the spiritual intendment of the particular beauty here described⁵, ‘Your feet shod with the preparation of ‘the gospel of peace.’ These are the shoes which adorn the church’s feet, and make her steps, her *pomi*, beautiful⁶; and thus shod, she will be both inclined and enabled to ‘turn her feet to the divine ‘testimonies’⁷. But there is likewise another sense in which this mention of shoes may be taken. There is a strange sort of declaration in two of the Psalms,

¹ Deut. xxxiii. 25.² Chap. xvi. 10.³ Chap. xv. 22.⁴ Exodus iii. 5. Joshua v. 15.⁵ Ephes. vi. 15.⁶ Isaiah lii. 7.⁷ Psalm cxix. 59.

Psalms', 'Over Edom will I cast out my shoe,' which, though by itself it may carry a threatening idea, yet, in connexion with the other parts of the Psalm, appears to have a more favourable meaning. And to open up that meaning, we have something in the short but affecting story of Ruth, to be a kind of key to us'. Plucking off the shoe was the outward symbol of redeeming an inheritance, in which sense, the speaker in the Psalm, who seems to be the Beloved of the Song, may use it to claim his right of redeeming Edom²; and, in the same sense, there is no harm, I hope, in expounding it here, to describe the spouse under this emblem of divine original, to be 'the redeemed inheritance' of her Beloved.

The joints of thy thighs like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman.—This part of the description, and what follows in the next verse, are neither of easy, nor of what we would call decent explication, in the literal sense: In the spiritual sense, there is nothing of indelicacy, and no great difficulty. *Thy thighs*, ירכיך, *irkika*, as belonging to our spiritual mother, may have a reference to the

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² Psalm lx. 8. and cviii. 9.

² Chap. iv. 7, 8. compared with, and conform to, the appointment, Deut. xxv. 5—10.

³ אדם, *adum*, humanity, human nature, 'who will lead me into *Adam*?' Ps. lx. 9. Who is this that cometh from *Adam*? Isaiah lxiii. 1. See above, p. 322.

solemnity used by Abraham¹, and afterwards adopted to the same purpose by Jacob², ‘Put thy hand under my thigh, and I will make thee swear,’ &c. Which reference, if just, would be a symbolical reminding us of the sacred engagements we are under to the church, and of her having the same authority over us that Abraham had over his steward, or Jacob over his son Joseph. It may likewise have a retrospect to what befel her old representative Jacob, in his divine wrestling³, when the mighty one, with whom he struggled, ‘touched the hollow of his thigh, and put it out of joint.’ And to this touch, which had such an effect upon Jacob, there is something in the description before us, which, when properly attended to, seems peculiarly to correspond. *The work of the hands of a cunning workman.*—The word so arbitrarily rendered *cunning workman*, is *אמן*, *amen*, which, in all the many places where it occurs, always retains its radical idea of ‘truth, faithfulness, and certainty⁴.’ Indeed there is no christian who does not understand the import of this Hebrew word, which every

¹ Gen. xxiv. 2.

² Gen. xlvii. 29.

³ Gen. xxxii. 25.

⁴ I have gone through all Calasio’s quotations, and find this to be invariably the case, except Cant. vii. 1. ‘opus manuum artificis.’ Robertson’s Lexicon makes a separate sense of this root, *amen*, to be ‘artifex, opifex,’ and in proof of it, produces Cant. vii. 1. Buxtorf had done the same before him. But for all this there is no foundation, and as little necessity. We read of a time, indeed, when cunning workmen were really and literally employed, Exod. xxxv. 35. where the word is not *amen*, but *חושב*, *hushb*.

every European language has made its own, *amen*; and tho' we had not had Isaiah's warrant for blessing 'and swearing by אֱלֹהֵי אֱמֶת, *Alei amen*, the God of 'truth', we cannot forget who it is that takes it to himself—'Thus saith the *Amen*, the true and 'faithful witness.' It was he whose hands, if we admit the prophet Hosea as a competent interpreter, wrought that change on the old church's thigh. It is he who forms the *irkim*, 'thighs,' of his church, to answer all the purposes, metaphorical or emblematical, to which scripture applies the word *irk*. For besides the human body, we find it applied to many other things, to houses, to mountains, to caverns, and to nothing more frequently than the sacred tabernacle throughout the Books of Exodus and Leviticus, where we read *sides*. Thus, for one instance, we read of the sacrifice being killed on 'the side (*irk*, thigh) of the altar northward¹, to which Isaiah alludes, in that vaunting speech which he puts into the mouth of the king of Babylon, as typifying antichrist², 'I will sit upon the mount of 'the congregation, in the sides (*irkti*, thighs) of the 'north'; which Robertson's Lexicon quotes Cocceius thus expounding, 'The sides of the north, i. e. 'next to the altar, between God dwelling in his temple and the people, as it were vicar of God, 'and mediator between God and men³.'

VER.

¹ Isaiah lxxv. 16.

² Rev. iii. 14.

³ Levit. i. 11.

⁴ Isaiah xiv. 13.

⁵ Compare 2 Thess. ii. 4.

VER. 2.—*Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor; thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies.*

There is no word in the text for *like*—*thy navel a goblet, thy belly an heap*. The word for *liquor* is *יין*, *mezg*, which the LXX. have rendered *κραμα*, and our margin, ‘mixture.’ And here, before I go further, I cannot but express my surprise, on the one hand, that Jerom, in whose time it is certain that the word *κραμα* of the LXX. was in use, should have dropt it, and given us the general rendering, *poculis*, ‘cups;’ and on the other hand, that our translators, when it had fallen into disuse, should have again brought it into view, even upon the margin. Be in this what will, the spiritual sense here is so clear, under the apparent uncouthness of the natural one, that our late paraphraser has been forced to take notice of it, and I shall quote his very words: ‘The spirit, as represented by a spring of water, is said to flow from Christ; the cup of blessing from his spouse, the church; and that, a mixed cup, in opposition to the cup of wrath, which is unmixed’. These texts, compared with many others, shew the particular reason why these things are mentioned among the perfections of the bride*. To strengthen this remark, it may not be amiss to observe, that the word for *goblet*, *יין*, *agn*, seems, from the use of it, to have belonged to

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things

* Rev. xiv. 10.

* O si sic omnia dixisset!

things sacred, being found only here, and in two other places, where it is said ¹, ‘Moses took of the blood, (which he calls the blood of the covenant ²), and put it in *agnuth*, basons.’ And again, in Isaiah’s mystical prefiguration of Christ’s dignity, under the type of Eliakim ³, ‘the glory of his father’s house —the vessels of *agnuth*, cups;’ which rendering, had it been retained here, would have been more pointed towards the spiritual application. The *navel* too ⁴, being the central point of the body, where we are told a rupture or wound would be mortal, may represent the middle of the sacred fabric, where the *krama*, mixture, is prepared, and where, in times of primitive zeal, it was never ‘wanting.’

Thy belly a heap of wheat set about with lilies.—It is strange, that the eye, which saw spiritual meaning in the first part, did not see it here too, where it is equally, if not more, plain and obvious. *Of wheat*—not the emblem only, but the very substance of nourishment, the foundation of bread, the staff of life, of bread, which both naturally and spiritually ‘strengthens man’s heart’⁵: And the *belly*, as in nature, the concocter and distributor

¹ Exod. xxiv. 6,

² See St Matth. xxvi. 28.

³ Chap. xxii. 24.

⁴ See Prov. iii. 8. ‘The fear of the Lord—health to thy navel,’ And Ezek. xvi. 4. ‘Thy navel was not cut,’ one of the miseries of the wretched foundling of human nature.

⁵ Psalm civ. 15.

butter of nourishment to all the members of the body, very properly and consistently invested with that office here. *Set about with lilies*—‘rejoicings,’ passive, ‘rejoicers,’ active, about the precious board that presents the feast of joy. It certainly cannot escape the attentive reader, how frequently and studiously, as it were, our inspired bard entertains us with these *shoshannim*, ‘lilies,’ not as ‘emblems of purity and perfection,’ which the flower does not eminently possess, nor the name signify, nor the humble soul pretend to, but as expressive of that spiritual, that only real joy, which mutually subsists between Christ and his faithful church; he rejoicing over her to do her good¹, and she rejoicing in him, and deriving all her joy from him². The Poet’s order of the two parts of our spiritual nourishment, like that of the Psalmist³, will create no difficulty to the christian who remembers St Paul’s ‘cup of blessing which we bless—the bread which we break⁴.’ Before I part with this verse, I shall, to silence, if not satisfy, the profane scoffer, observe, that I think I see in these three last parts of the description, thighs, navel, belly, with the high comparisons both of ornament and utility severally assigned to them, something that seems at least to correspond with St Paul’s account of the matter, ‘Those members of the body which we think to be less honourable, upon them

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¹ Isaiah lxii. 5. lxx. 19.² St John xvi. 22. 24.³ Psalm civ. 15.⁴ 1 Cor. x. 16.

‘we bestow more abundant honour, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness’.

VER. 3.—*Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins.*

VER. 4.—*Thy neck is as a tower of ivory. [These have been sufficiently explained already.] Thine eyes like the fish-pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim; thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon, looking towards Damascus.*

The fair one's eyes have hitherto been compared to dove's eyes. Here we have a most strange, and almost inexplicable contexture. Yet a minute attention to, and analysis of, the several words, may give some assistance. The great stumbling-block is from the *fish-pools*. A beautiful woman's eyes to be likened to, or called *fish-pools*, has an odd sound, and will never pass for a compliment. The Hebrew word is בִּרְכֹת, *barkuth*, from בָּרַךְ, *barak*, to ‘bless.’ There are indeed some two or three places where the context leads to ‘pools of water;’ but why specifically *fish-pools*, is altogether unaccountable. In the book of Joshua, we meet with an historical anecdote, which, though seemingly of no great moment, may be of some use here²—‘Caleb said to his daughter, What wouldst thou? And she said, Give me a ‘blessing’ (Heb. *barkeh*, ‘LXX. εὐλογίαν, Jerom, ‘benedictionem’); for thou
‘hast

¹ Cor. xii. 23.

² Josh. xv. 19.

'hast given me a south land, give me also springs of water (*galth mim*).' And he gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.' Here we see that both Caleb and his daughter looked upon springs of water as a blessing; as in these early times, springs and wells of water were of high, indeed, of sacred estimation. And it is after this, perhaps from this original, that we find the word *barkuth* used, as I said, now and then to signify 'pools,' sometimes by itself, sometimes with the addition of *mim*, 'water'. But where the context does not, by some local circumstance, determine the sense that way, it were better to retain the radical idea of 'blessing.' Of this we have a notable instance in the 84th Psalm¹, which we read, 'Who passing through the valley of *Baca*², 'make it a well, the rain also filleth, *barkuth*, the 'pools;' which Pagninus makes 'piscinas, fish-pools.' The LXX. have it, *καταρ ευλογιας δωσει ο νομοθετων*, and Jerom, to the same sense, 'etenim benedictiones dabit legislator, the lawgiver will give 'blessings;' Arias Montanus has it 'benedictionibus operietur docens, the teacher will be covered 'with blessings;' differing indeed as to the verb, but agreeing in the sense of 'blessing,' which every one will acknowledge is more consonant to, and expressive of, the design of this beautiful Psalm,

¹ As in Eccles. ii. 6. Nahum ii. 9.

² Ver. 8.

³ The Prayer Book has it 'misery.'

Psalm, than the word *pools*: And had the term ‘benedictiones, blessings,’ been retained here, it would have made the comparison fully as intelligible as the *fish-pools in Heshbon*.¹ These, like the chariots of Amminadib, may, in the literal acceptation, afford room for ingenious conjecture, but point to no useful meaning. *Heshbon*, I know, is the name of a city, where Sihon, one of the devoted heathen kings dwelt², and is often exhibited by the prophets³, as an object of wrath and punishment, therefore not likely to furnish our poet with a proper emblem of either praise or instruction, whether it had fine *fish-pools* or not. We must therefore deal with it, as we did with *Tirzah*, take it out of its local character, and examine it in its derivative one. Its root is **חשב**, *hashb*, which, in all the places where it occurs, and it occurs in a great many, always conveys the sense of ‘cogitare, deliberare, ratiocinari, reputare, thinking, contriving, ‘reckoning.’ It is the word used through the whole book of Exodus, to express both the workmen and work of the tabernacle, which we read ‘cunning.’ It is used to signify ‘self-examination’⁴, ‘I thought upon *hashbti*, my ways,’ &c. Imputation of something⁵, ‘Counted to him, *hashb*, ‘for righteousness.’ It is applied to either good or bad designs⁵, ‘Ye thought, *hashbtem*, evil against

¹ Numb. xxi. 34.

² Isaiah xv. xvi. Jerem. xlviii. xlix.

³ Psalm cxix. 59.

⁴ Gen. xv. 6. Psalm cwi. 31.

⁵ Gen. i. 20.

‘gainst me, but God, *hashbt*, meant it for good.’ The Rabbins, in their writings, use it, *hashbon*, to denote what they call ‘philosophy.’ So extensive is its application, but all with the same radical idea and to the same meaning. There is however an addition here, by way of topographical description of the situation of these *fish-pools*—*by the gate of Bathrabbim*, which we are told, from a passage in Jeremiah¹, but without any authority, was the name of a gate in the city of *Heshbon*, leading to *Rabbath*. The old versions have translated this word בִּתְרַבִּים, *Bathrabbim*, which our’s retains as a proper name. The LXX. make it θυγατρὸς πολλῶν, Jerom, ‘*filiae multitudinis*, daughter of the many,’ ‘or multitude;’ Arias Montanus and Marius Calasio have it, ‘*filiae magnatum*, daughter of the ‘great ones.’ This last rendering has some shew of propriety, which the other has not, as the *rabbim* (plural from *rab*, ‘great one,’ taken notice of above) may lead the mind to an idea of high import in christianity, to the *rabbim*, or *rubbim*, exhibited in vision to the prophet Ezekiel, under figures which, he says², he knew to be the *che-rubim*; and afterwards to the apoclypt St John, under the same figures, and to the same purpose³. In this view, which could be confirmed and fully illustrated, if it were necessary, or this a proper place,

¹ Chap. xlix. 3.

² Chap. x. 20.

³ Rev. iv. 7.—E₁istle for Trinity Sunday.

place, 'daughter of the great ones,' has a meaning analogous to the Psalmist's 'gates of the daughter of Zion,' 'the city of Melkrab, the great king', 'who loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob'; and which gates are 'open continually for the reception of the Gentiles,' as predicted by Isaiah ³, and exhibited to St John ⁵. In the words thus analysed and compared, we have a reference to, and are thereby put in mind of, the ingenious work of the tabernacle, which had an aspect forward to Christ ⁶, of the imputation of something to us for our benefit, and of the proper exercise of our reasoning faculties, in meditating, or self-examining, all connected with Zion, the church, and introduced with the direct mention of 'blessing.' How to accommodate this to the *eyes* is no great difficulty—'Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see', is a warranted application: Prophesied of before-hand by Isaiah ⁸, 'All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God:' Realized to good old Simeon ⁹, 'Mine eyes have seen thy salvation:' Explained and claimed in St John ¹⁰, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad:' To be therefore daily and devoutly

³ Psalm ix. 14.² Psalm xlviii. 3.³ Psalm lxxvii. 1.⁴ Chap. lx. 11. 14.⁵ Rev. xxi. 25, 26.⁶ Heb. ix. throughout.⁷ St Luke x. 23.⁸ Ch. xxxiii. 20. xxxv. 2. xl. 5. xlix. 7. and more pointedly, lii. 8. 10.⁹ St Luke ii. 30.¹⁰ Chap. viii. 56.

voutly prayed for by the church, collectively and individually, with the Psalmist, 'Open thou mine eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of thy law.' With this opening, fitting, and strengthening them for the delightful employment, our eyes will be *barkuth*, 'blessings' to us indeed. Without such direction, our most industrious researches, our most philosophic investigations, our most extolled discoveries, will be, if not a curse, at best but vanity and confusion.

Thy nose as the tower of Lebanon, looking towards Damascus.—A simile this of no easy adjustment in all its branches, as the analytical method, which was so serviceable in the former part of the verse, is not so here. The word for *Damascus*, דַּמָּשֶׁק, *dammesek*, though, like Heshbon, the name of a city, is neither of such frequent use nor certain interpretation. As a city, it was long the capital of a great kingdom, sometimes in amity, but more frequently in enmity, with the people of God. And we find it held forth, like Egypt and Babylon, as a type of the church's enemies, and threatened accordingly, 'The burden of Damascus—' behold Damascus is taken away from being a city,' &c. And again, 'I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus,' &c. The word for *nose*, אֶפֶס, *aph*, is known to be much used in scripture, to

¹ Psalm cxix. 18.

² Isaiah xvii. 1.

3 Jerem. xlix. 27.

signify anger, wrath, &c. ; and the word for *looking* is *זָפַח*, *zupheh*, *σχοπεύω*, LXX. which implies more than barely *looking*, and denotes ‘looking with ‘care’ or ‘watching,’ and may be employed either in a friendly, or in a hurtful sense, as by the Psalmist, ‘The wicked, *zupheh*, watcheth the righteous, ‘and seeketh to slay him.’ So here, the *nose looking towards Damascus*, which construction the words will bear, may mean a look of anger directed to that hostile quarter: And, to remove any objection from the incongruity of attributing such a disposition to the fair one, let it be remembered, that, *though beautiful as Tirzah, and comely as Jerusalem*, she is at the same time *terrible as an army with banners*. And to whom shall she be terrible under these banners of her great Captain, but to his, and her avowed enemies, the Damascuses of either ancient or modern times? But as I am willing to believe that every thing in this heavenly song of *loves* is designed to convey pleasant ideas, I am happy to find that the words under consideration will bear a more favourable turn. The *nose*, we know, is the organ of smelling, and the mentioning it here, in apposition to Lebanon, the hill of incense, both in signification and fact, discovers something of an analogy that may be conceived, but cannot be well expressed. This *look*, therefore, from the tower of Lebanon, the incense tower, towards Damascus, may be construed in a favourable sense, as a look of
of

of mercy and kindness, of reconciliation and acceptance: Of which we have something of a literal exemplification in St Paul's history, which tells us¹ how early the *incense-smoke* towards Damascus had begun, and with such success, as provoked the persecutors at Jerusalem to send an express messenger to put a stop to it, but in vain: And, as we have seen her made a general type for wrath and punishment, here we may view her as a general type for love and blessing, in conformity to, and in fulfilment of, the gracious prediction by Malachi, the last of the prophets², 'From the rising of the sun, to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place *incense* shall be offered unto me, and a pure offering—saith the Lord of hosts.'

VER. 5.—*Thine head upon thee like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple; the king is held in the galleries.*

The literal sense here seems to have the advantage over the spiritual; and it is almost the only instance of such an advantage, as it is possible, with the usual help of eastern figures, to adjust the comparison in some measure to the head and hair of a fine woman. But, according to my spiritual plan, a material question immediately arises—What, or who, is the church's head? Yet let us try, with our

¹ Acts ix.² Chap. i. 11.

scripture-key, to open up this finishing branch of description, so as to accommodate it to that question. *Like Carmel*.—This is a word of considerable importance, both literally and typically. Literally, ‘Mount Carmel’ is well known, as having been the theatre of that famous competition between Jehovah and Baal, under Elijah’s management, which had such a fatal catastrophe for the Baalites’. Typically, we find it spoken of in high terms of praise, and blessing promised under it*—‘the glory of Lebanon—the excellency of Carmel’—‘the glory of the Lord, the excellency of our God.’ ‘Yet a little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into Carmel,’ we read it ‘fruitful field.’ ‘Until the spirit be poured out upon us from on high, and the wilderness be *carmel*, fruitful field.’ ‘Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, in the midst of Carmel,’ &c. Desolation also is threatened under it†—‘a flame shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his Carmel, both soul and body.’ ‘Gladness is taken away, and joy out of Carmel.’ ‘I beheld, and lo Carmel was a wilderness.’ ‘The habitation of the shepherds shall mourn, the top of Carmel shall wither,’ &c.

We

* 1 Kings xviii.

† Isaiah xxxv. 2.

3 Isaiah xxix. 17.

4 Isaiah xxxii. 15.

5 Micah vii. 14.

6 Isaiah x. 18.

7 Compare 2 Kings xix. 23. Isaiah xvi. 10.

8 Jerem. iv. 26.

9 Amos i. 2.

We shall see, by and by, the use of all this : But there are two particularities, which I must first take notice of, to pave the way for my main conclusion. *Thy head upon thee*, ^{תָּו}, *olke*, Heb. ^{על} ^{על}, LXX. Arias Montanus, *super te*, above, over thee'. *Thy head upon thee*, is not quite proper stile; upon thy neck, or thy shoulders, would have sounded better : For what is the *thee* that has the head upon it? *The hair of thy head*, ^{דָּלַת}, *dalt*, never used in that sense but here. We have the very same word again in the next chapter*, 'if she be *dalt*, a door;' which indeed is the usual I might have said, the only, rendering of it every where else. And here I cannot but remark, that the current word for the hair, ^{שַׁר}, *shor*³, signifies likewise a 'gate.' A remark perhaps of little moment, but it is curious, and there is no harm in making it. The *dalt*, therefore, in this single place, may signify something about the head, such as *vitta*, a 'fillet,' which, Buxtorf says, was the sense that some put upon it, and is indeed more relative to (*argman*, which is always) purple, than the hair can well be said to be; especially in connexion with what follows, 'the king is held (*marg.* bound) in 'the galleries.' This in our Bibles stands as a sentence by itself, and passes with commentators for a sudden start of rapturous exclamation; but from what quarter, or to what purpose, they are not

* As above chap. ii. 4. 'His banner, *oli*, over me was love.'

² Ver. 9.

³ See above, chap. iv. 1.

not certain. Jerom joins it to what goes before, 'Sicut purpura regis, vineta canalibus, as the king's 'purple bound in canals;' which, from the relation between kings and purple, may give some idea, though, from the additional circumstance, not a distinct or precise one. What Jerom calls canals, and we galleries, the LXX. have παραδρομαῖς, courses. The original is כְּוִתִּים, *rethim*, which, as well as here, we meet with in Genesis¹, 'he set the rods 'in the 'gutters,' *berethim*, Heb. 'in canalibus,' Jerom εν τοις ληνοῖς, LXX.; and again, in Exodus², filled the 'troughs,' *rethim*; and no where else through the whole Bible. What to make of all this is not an easy matter, unless, by admitting a very supposeable conjecture, I shall call it nothing more, that this word *rethim*, being used by Moses, to signify 'gutters,' or 'troughs,' for watering sheep, and applied here to the Beloved, may, in conjunction with what goes before, be a picture, though but a faint one, of Him in his double attitude of King, with his royal purple, (dyed garments, red apparel)³ bound and obliged, in terms of the eternal covenant, to execute the gracious office of careful shepherd, 'leading forth his flocks by 'the waters of comfort⁴.' In this view, therefore, and upon the footing of Jerom's version, this verse might be read, as I hinted above about the angelic hymn, 'The king held (the text has not *is*) in

¹ Chap. xxx. 38. 41.

³ Isaiah lxiii. i. 2.

² Chap. ii. 16:

⁴ Psalm xxiii. 2.

‘ in the galleries, is thy *carmel*, head, with all the
 ‘ excellency of that significant emblem, and adorna-
 ‘ ed with his *tiara* of purple,’ &c. : Which, however
 fanciful it may appear, is no force upon the words,
 and neither contrary to grammatical construction,
 nor to christian doctrine, as being an enigmatical
 commentary on St Paul’s clear and express decla-
 ration’, ‘ that the husband is the head of the wife,
 ‘ even as Christ is the head of the church.’ If so,
 let me ask, Is he the only Head, or are there others
 besides him?

VER. 6.—*How fair, and how pleasant art thou, O love,
 for delights !*

Here we have the elegant description from the
 first verse and downward, summed up, as it were,
 by the Beloved, in one of his usual raptures of com-
 placency and praise, which needs no particular ex-
 planation, only to regulate the meaning of *delights*,
 which seems to be somewhat mistaken. Our read-
 ing *pleasant* for *delights*, makes her the actual giver,
 whereas the original, בתענוגים, *betonugim*, ‘ in deli-
 ‘ ciis, pleasant in delights,’ represents her as a hap-
 py receiver, which I think more becoming the
 church than the other. The root is ענן, *ong*,
 (whence perhaps our word ‘ young’), and, as a verb,
 occurs only in the neutral or hithpahel form, ex-
 pressing an inward feeling of delight derived from
 some

¹ Ephes. v. 23.

some other object. As¹, ‘delight thyself, *etlong*, ‘in, *al*, upon the Lord;’ and², ‘the meek shall inherit the earth’, *vetongu*, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace;’ literally, ‘of *rabshalam*, upon the great one, prince of peace;’ which, to the christian soul, is more satisfactory, and more consonant to fact. The Lexicons tell us, that this *hithpakeh* verb for the most part takes the preposition *al*, upon, ‘delight ‘themselves *upon*;’ and hence, probably, has arisen that phrase in devotional style, of ‘lying, leaning, resting, upon Christ,’ which, however abused by fanatics, or ridiculed by philosophers, has a most expressive meaning, and is warranted by scripture. Our present writer countenances it in the next chapter—‘Who is this—leaning, *al*, upon her Beloved?’ And ‘where we read, ‘Commit thy way unto the ‘Lord,’ the margin has it, ‘roll thy way upon ‘the Lord.’ This lets us see what and whence the delights are, which make the fair one so pleasant in and to herself³, the excellencies of her Beloved communicated by him to her, and by him commended in her.

VER.

¹ Psalm xxxvii. 4.

² Ver. 11.

³ ‘New earth,’ Isaiah lxxv. 17.

⁴ Psalm xxxvii. 5.

⁵ ‘Quam pulchruisti, et quam dulcuisti,’ Ar. Montanus.

VER. 7.—*This thy stature is like to a palm-tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.*

VER. 8.—*I said, I will go up to the palm-tree, I will take hold of the branches thereof.*

Let the literal sense try its hand here, and give us any thing consistent or instructive. The spiritual is clear and striking. *Like to a palm-tree,—* 'The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree'. Thy stature, ~~וְכַפִּי~~, *kumthka*², applied by Ezekiel³ to his parabolical vine, which at first was a spreading vine of low (*kume*) 'stature,' but became afterwards⁴ of exalted 'stature.' *I will go up to the palm-tree, I will take hold of the branches thereof—* apprehendam fructus ejus, Jerom; explained by St Paul⁵, 'He taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold,' *ἐπιλαμβάνεται*, apprehendit. The *palm-tree* of the Song, to which the church, ~~דָּמְתָה~~, *damthe*, is likened here, (as before to a connexion with Pharaoh⁶), is St Paul's 'seed of Abraham;' and the conclusion is obvious in both the comparisons. It was the seed of Abraham that were the drudges in Pharaoh's chariot. It is the seed of Abraham (who had righteousness

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¹ Psalm xcii. 12. *אֶשׁ*; *phœnix*, LXX. as 'phœnix,' which has been thought the original of the fable about the bird of that name.

² Compare Ephes. iv. 13.

³ Chap. xvii. 6.

⁴ Chap. xix. 10.

⁵ Heb. ii. 16. where the margin gives the true rendering.

⁶ Chap. i. 9.

imputed to him) that shall flourish like the *palm-tree*. It is the seed of Abraham, the father of the *faithful*, whom the Beloved of the Song, the Jesus of St Paul, takes hold of in all its branches, to the fullest extent of meaning that the apostle's words will bear. And here I cannot but take particular notice of that visible peculiarity of style with which this declaration of the Beloved is introduced, *I said, I will go up—I will take hold*, not to be met with again in all the Poem ; but exactly similar to, and corresponding with, the Psalmist's language', 'Mine ears hast thou opened—then said I, Lo, I 'come.' If we shall be allowed to suppose that Solomon had seen this piece of his father's composition, which, if not certain, is at least very probable, it will be no great stretch to conclude, that he had copied this bold stroke of the Psalm into his Song, with the same view, and, under another figure, to the same purpose. And as he would see, that his father could not speak so of himself, in his natural person, which in this instance is universally allowed, it must be allowed also, that Solomon speaks not this of himself, or in his own natural person ; consequently, not in the literal, but in an emblematical sense, of which I think St Paul has given us a satisfactory explication, at least till some able commentator shall produce a better.

VER.

VER. 8.—*Now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples.*

VER. 9.—*And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my Beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.*

This fine description, in all its parts, we see by the connexion *shall be*, is the consequence of the *taking hold*; and gives in general a noble idea of the privileges and advantages which the church derives from that wonderfully important circumstance. The latter part of the eighth verse has been considered already, as may be seen in the passages where *breasts*, *wine*, and *apples*, have occurred. But what to make of this ninth verse is the question. It certainly has a meaning, and a lofty one too, tho' perhaps not reached by expositors, nor agreed in by translators. Attempts have been made, by changing some of the capital words, on the rash, but too common supposition, of an error having, as they phrase it, crept into the text, to force some kind of sense upon it. For my own part, I am not ashamed to acknowledge my not being able to give it what I would think a proper explanation; at the same time that some of the leading words present something to my mind, which I cannot well express. Thus, the *roof of thy mouth* here, points to the same word used before, 'His mouth is most sweet,'

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and

and¹, 'his fruit sweet to my *taste*.' The Beloved now returns these praises to his fair one's mouth; and, by the long deduction that follows in this difficult verse, seems to enlarge upon the compliment he had paid her before², 'Sweet is thy voice,' and repeated³, 'Thy speech is comely.' *That goeth down sweetly*, is applicable enough to good wine, but not agreeable to the text—*לְיִשְׁרָיִם*, *culk lemishkrim*, *πορευόμενος εἰς εὐθύτητα*, LXX. *vadens ad rectitudines*, Montanus; literally, 'going (no *down* in 'the word) to the upright⁴.' But the great difficulty in the way of a clear and unexceptionable interpretation, is the position of *לְדוּדִי*, *le Duddi*, for *my Beloved*, which coming from the Beloved's own mouth, as the whole of the verse certainly does, has puzzled expositors how to reconcile it either to grammar or propriety. Yet besides this, I find another word of doubtful character where it stands, the word *דָּבַב*, *dubb*, which we read 'causing to speak.' This is the only place where this root occurs in the verbal form. As a noun it is but rare, only in nine texts, in all of which it is rendered 'infamy, evil report, slander,' &c. The versions give little assistance here: Arias Montanus has it, 'loqui-

¹ Chap. ii. 3.

² Chap. ii. 14.

³ Chap. iv. 3.

⁴ Chap. i. 4. 'The upright, *misbrim*, love thee.' See what is said above upon that verse, where there is mention made of *wine*, and the mentioning it here may have a reference to the meaning there, so that both may afford a mutual illustration of each other.

‘loquifaciens labia dormientium,’ from which we have taken our *causing the lips of them that are asleep to speak*. The LXX. by a strange turn ^{ἰκανοὶ μου καὶ ὁδόν μου} ‘sufficient for my lips and teeth.’ And Jerom, by one equally as strange, ‘vinum dignum dilecto meo ad potandum, labisque et dentibus illius ad ruminandum—wine worthy of my Beloved for drinking, and for his teeth and lips to ruminate upon!’ All seeming to take this only once occurring word in a good sense, which is rather arbitrary. Let me, after such difference, hazard a rendering on the basis of its common acceptance in a bad sense.—The speech of the ‘church flowing in love to the upright, but of evil report, or slandered by the lips of the sleepers.’ It is well known what opinion Solomon, in his Proverbs, forms of the slothful or *sleepers*, and what stress he lays upon the *lips*, for either a good or bad purpose. From all this together, there arises in my mind, a meaning which I have thus endeavoured to put into words, though I will not risk the attempt, in which others have failed, of solving every difficulty, or making out a satisfactory explanation of this mysterious passage.—Quod intelligo adoro, quod non intelligo admiror.

VER. 10.—*I am my Beloved’s, and his desire is towards me.*

The church now, after such strong declarations of affection and praise, breaks forth into her former
extatic

extatic rapture of grateful exultation, *I am my Beloved's*, with this new addition of consolatory assurance, *his desire is towards me*—עָלַי הַשְׁקָחָה, *oli teshuqtu*, Heb. ἐπ' ἐμὲ ἡ ἐπιστοφὴ αὐτοῦ, LXX. 'ad me' 'conversio ejus,' Jerom. This word is early made use of by Jehovah himself, on a most solemn occasion of mercy and judgement mingled together'—*teshuqtaka*, 'thy desire shall be to thy husband,' in a sense of matrimonial connexion, and applicable enough to the use of it before us. For though, both in that declaration to our old mother, and in the amazingly condescending expostulation with Cain, where this word is used², 'Unto thee shall' 'be his desire,' there is certainly an intimation of subjection incompatible in the present case; it is to be observed, that such an intimation does not lie in, nor belong to, our present word, but is distinctly and separately expressed by the direction of 'rule' in the context. The word therefore is, in its early application, highly expressive of the church's faith and confidence in the Beloved's attachment to her, and exactly agreeable to the figurative language of the prophets on that delightful theme³. Indeed, on the hypothesis which some adopt,

¹ Gen. iii. 16.

² Gen. iv. 7.

³ I do not know, if it shall be thought material to take notice of the particular force of the preposition here, *oli*, which we read, 'towards me.' In the two passages from Genesis, the preposition is *al*, 'to,' ad, πρὸς, LXX. Here it is *ol*, 'over, above,' super, ἐπὶ, LXX. which gives a fuller idea than 'towards,' conformable to her own use of it,

adopt, and others ridicule, of the Hebrew being an 'ideal' language, and retaining more or less the primary sense of every root through all its deflexions, this word *teshuqt*, 'desire,' in its application here, presents to the mind sundry ideas, which, when carried up to spiritual signification, would afford the highest relish of comfort and gratification to the pious soul, and give a zest to one of the most exquisite 'desires' that the animal frame is capable of. *I am my Beloved's, and his desire is towards me.* From this verse, to the conclusion of the poem, is a mixed, and what might be called a familiar conversation between the fair one and her Beloved, in terms indeed of apparently secular occupation, but such as, upon minute enquiry, will be found to contain a great store of spiritual meaning under them.

VER. 11.—*Come, my Beloved, let us go forth into the field, let us lodge in the villages.*

The church in bold, but well warranted language of intimate union, as just before expressed, by her warmly soliciting her Beloved to some particular act of watchful care and beneficence, and to allow her some humble share in it, now breaks out into this invitation, *Let us go into the field, השדה, ha-*

it, chap. ii. 4. 'his banner over me,' *oli*, and to the same sense with Isaiah's application of it, chap. lxii. 5. 'As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.'

hashadeh, in agrum. It frequently occurs, and is generally used to denote 'ground under cultivation,' 'a cultivated field,' in opposition to **יָד**, *iar*, wood or forest, with which it is once joined in mystical description', 'the fields of 'the wood.' In this sense the reference is obvious, as pointing to the happy spot under spiritual cultivation, but still needing the cultivator's eye for its further improvement; and stated here as in distinction from the other branch of the call, *Let us lodge in the villages*, **בְּכִפְרִים**, *bekephrim*. The root is *kephr*, a word of much use, and of vast importance, as already explained¹. Upon what grounds, or by what authority, translators have rendered it *villages*, in the sense we put upon that word, does not appear. Calasio's concordance produces only four other places where it is thus rendered. The first is in Joshua², which we read in one word, *Chephar-haamonai*, one of the twelve cities that had **חֲרָדִים**, *har-ruth*, villages, so not likely to be a village itself, as Marius translates it. We meet with it next in the singular number³, **כִּפְרֵי הַרְצִי**, *kephr heprzi*, which we read 'country villages;' as if *kephr* stood for 'country,' for the other word, *perzi*, is by itself twice used for villages⁴. The other two places where

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¹ Psalm cxxxii. 6.

² Chap. i. 14.

³ Chap. xviii. 24.

⁴ 1 Sam. vi. 18. *

⁵ Judges v. 7. 11.

* As the quotation from 1 Sam. vi. 18. in course of my subject, has brought into view the history of the Philistines sending home the ark of God,

our word *kephrim* is found for ‘villages,’ are in
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God, let me be indulged in another digression, to hint something which I would humbly offer as, at least, a possible solution of perhaps the most plausible objection that infidelity has to throw out against our sacred books. We read, that at this time the Lord was angry with the people of Bethshemesh for looking ‘into the ark,’ and smote of them fifty thousand, and threescore and ten men. Now, says the infidel, besides the cruelty of such a prodigious slaughter, so unlike a merciful and benevolent Being, it is not probable that there could be so many men in Bethshemesh, which is nowhere mentioned to be a place of much note, or that such a vast multitude either could or would have looked into the ark at one time. The consequence is plain; but the whole of this formidable objection is drawn from the translations, as indeed most, if not all, of the cavils of the infidels are; for they do not, perhaps dare not, meddle with the original. The Hebrew order of enumeration, which the LXX. and Jerom have retained, but our translators have reversed, will, with only changing the position of one single letter, give a better and more natural account. It is well known, that for a long time the Hebrew text was neither broken into chapters and verses, nor into such marked distinctions of sentences, and even words, as our present copies bear. This numeration in Heb. is, שבעים איש חמשים אלף איש, in our letters, *sboim aish bmsbim alp aish*, literally as thus distinguished, ‘Seventy persons, fifty thousand persons or men:’ All I propose therefore is, to take the *m* from the word *bmsbim* (which, with it, is ‘fifty,’ and without it, ‘five’), and prefix it to the next word *alp*, thus, *bmsbi malp aish*, which will make the whole numeration to be, ‘Septuaginta viros, quinque ex mille viris—seventy men, five out of a thousand men;’ stating this last number as explanatory of the first; and thereby giving the whole number of the inhabitants of Bethshemesh to be fourteen thousand, which is both more probable, and more consonant to the history, as it may be thought these seventy, the fives of every thousand, who were thus smitten, had been the principal men of the place, so might think themselves privileged to look into the ark, as Uzzah afterwards thought he was to touch it, (2 Sam. vi. 7.), and was in like manner punished for his forwardness. I am warranted in this use of the preposition *ב*, by other texts where we meet with it in the same sense, as Numb. xxxi. 5. ‘Out of the thousands of Israel;’ Job ix. 3. and
xxxiii.

the first Chronicles¹ and Nehemiah², but without any absolute necessity for that sense from the context. However, as retaining the grand idea of 'atone~~ment~~' to *kephir*, in this place, may be objected to, as either too refined or too obscure; and, if we must take it in its rare signification of 'villages,' as distinct from the 'field,' even this will admit a more congruous interpretation on the spiritual plan, than it can do on the natural. If the field, *shadah*, stand as I have said it does, for the cultivated part, which had been long under the great husbandman's care³, the *villages*, which the fair one wishes her Beloved to bless with his presence and attention, may mean those hitherto neglected parts, not as yet within that happy pale, realized in the Acts of the Apostles⁴, when they said⁵, 'Lo, we turn 'to the Gentiles.' Or, still in closer apposition to the literal sense of villages, *villæ*, *pagi*, when we look back to the early state of christianity, which began at first in great cities, Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome; &c. where in a short time there were vast numbers of converts and settled officers appointed,

while

xxxiii. 23. 'One of, among, a thousand;' Eccles. vii. 28. 'One man 'among a thousand.' What I thus offer, is not altering or correcting the text, which I shall never attempt; it is only correcting, if even that, rabbins and translators, which, in such an easy way, and with such a laudable view, will I hope be thought, if not altogether admissible, at least in a great measure excusable.

¹ Chap. xxvii. 25.

² Chap. vi. 2.

³ St John xv. 1.

⁴ Chap. x. 45.

⁵ Chap. xiii. 46.

while the pagani, the inhabitants of the pagi, the country villages, either remained in their heathen, pagan, darkness, or were only visited with the gospel light now and then, and, as it were, in transitu; till in process of time, as believers increased in them, they too by degrees came to have the face of a regular church among them, with bishops in some, and presbyters in all of them: And then, according to the fair one's solicitation before us, it may be said, that her Beloved and she lodged, commorabantur, took up their residence in the villages, he primarily bestowing, and she subordinatedly dispensing, as the appointed steward of his mysteries, the blessings of his love, and thereby extending his salvation to the ends of the earth'.

VER. 12.—*Let us get up early to the vineyards, let us see if the vine flourish, if the tender grape appear, and the pomegranate bud forth; there will I give thee my loves.*

The spiritual sense of this verse is elegant, and discovers itself under those beautiful figures, the meaning of which has been already shewn. I have only to observe here that happy strain of uniformity, which is so visible in the sacred language. *Let us get up early*, נֶשְׁכִּימֶה, neshkimeh, the very word which the prophet Jeremiah repeatedly puts into the Beloved's own mouth—' rising up early and

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' speak-

‘ speaking ’, ‘ rising up early and sending ’.¹ I say, *the Beloved’s own mouth*, as it is confessed that he was the speaker, the *dabar*, the *logos*, of these old times; and the sender too, as the connexion of his pathetic expostulation in the 23d chapter of St Matthew³ does plainly indicate—*there will I give thee my loves*, the offerings of my grateful heart.

VER. 13.—*The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my Beloved.*

What these *dudaim* really are (which here and in Genesis⁴, the only places where the word is found, our translators have rendered *mandrakes*), is not agreed upon by commentators, and perhaps never will. From the use made of them in Genesis, which I am inclined to believe had an emblematical view, otherwise I cannot think that such an apparently trifling circumstance would have been so minutely recorded; and, from the spouse’s mentioning of them here, in reference no doubt to the value that the two old mothers of the holy seed put upon them, it would seem the word, whatever it means, has a near relation to *love*, as its formation evidently bears, and, by what we read of it, to connubial love in particular, of which the happy soul that feels with the spouse here may have a proper

¹ Jerem. vii. 13.

² Chap. vii. 25. xxvi. 5; &c.

³ Ver. 37.

⁴ Gen. xxx.

proper and pleasant idea, but which I am confident no language but the Hebrew has proper words to express.

At our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old.—The margin of some of our large Bibles presents us with a New-Testament key to this¹, ‘Every instructed scribe—is like a householder ‘who bringeth forth out of his treasure things *new and old.*’ *Fruits* is an addition, not being in the text. The word is מגדים, *magdim*, *deliciæ*, ‘precious things,’ much used by Moses in his blessing of Joseph², and twice before in this Song³, *pleasant fruits*, where the word for fruits, *pri*, is added, which are all the places where the simple root *magd* occurs.

At our gates, על פתחיה, *ol pathahinu*, ἐπὶ θυραῖς ἡμεῶν, LXX. *super ostiis nostris*, Montanus and Calasio, ‘above our doors,’ not a very likely place, one should think, for laying up or hiding, (as the word *tzephnthi*⁴ radically signifies) *pleasant fruits*. The word *pathahi* primarily signifies ‘openings,’ and is often joined with *shor*, the usual word for *gate*⁵; as in that lofty Psalm⁶, ‘Lift up your heads, ye, *shorim*, gates, and be ye lift up, ye *everlasting doors*,’⁷

What

¹ St Matth. xiii. 52.

² Deut. xxxiii. 13—16.

³ Chap. iv. 13. 16.

⁴ See above, chap. iv. 16.

⁵ As Jerem. i. 15, xxvi. 10. xxxvi. 10. ‘the entry,’ marg. ‘door of the gate,’ &c.

⁶ xxiv. 7. 9.

⁷ *Pathabi oulm*, Heb. *πυλᾶι αἰωνιαί*, LXX. ‘portæ eternales,’ Jerom, ‘fores seculi,’ Calasio.

What are these everlasting doors? Like Moses's and Habakkuk's 'everlasting mountains'; they will not admit the common meaning put upon 'everlasting,' neither does that Hebrew word, עולם, *oulm*, require it. Its current signification is 'age,' corresponding with the Greek *aiwn*, and Latin *seculum*, and when not otherwise restricted, is thought, even by the Rabbins themselves, to denote the days 'of Messiah.' This throws light upon the Psalmist's 'everlasting doors,' and it would be no great stretch to apply them in that light to the *pathahinu* of our Song; in which, though they are here considered as properly belonging to the Beloved, the church, by virtue of her dignifying union, is privileged to claim a community². This interpretation, if admitted, is consonant to the Baptist's 'preparatory' warning³, 'The kingdom 'of heaven is at hand,' the *pathahi oulm*, the 'age' of Messiah, is opening. 'Bring forth, therefore'⁴, ' (your *magdim*, delicacies), fruits meet for repentance, *agapous*, worthy of the Beloved's acceptance.'

CHAP.

² Deut. xxxiii. 15. Hab. iii. 6.

³ 'As in the bed,' chap. i. 16. 'and house,' v. 17.

⁴ St Math. iii. 2.

⁴ Ver. 8.

CHAP. VIII.

VER. 1.—*O that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother; when I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised.*

I HAVE already observed of the structure of this admirable Poem, that it is to no purpose to seek for strict connexion of parts in it, and would be doing it injustice to try it by the arbitrary rules of modern criticism. The verse now before us is a proof of this. To what time or circumstances it may be adjusted, we need not enquire. It is the rapturous effusion of a feeling heart, overflowing with gratitude, and, in her own emphatic language, *sick of love*. An ardent wish is expressed in the strong stile of the Hebrew idiom—*Mi ithn*, ‘Who will give me?’ A wish, too, I may say, she has lived to see accomplished, according to the apostle’s argumentation in his Epistle to the Hebrews*. Yet in the nature of this wish, plain and
fervent

* Chap. ii. 11, 12, 17.

fervent as it is, there is something not easy to be accounted for, when we reflect that the Beloved himself had before this vested her with the title of *sister* no less than four times, and had thereby declared himself her *brother*. I will not have recourse here to what the late paraphraser calls 'the little inconsistencies of the bride's speech,' as I have hitherto met with nothing of that kind; and therefore believe that her meaning here is quite reconcileable to what she had heard before from her Beloved's mouth, and well suited to her consequent resolution, which our version reads in what grammarians call the optative mood, but the Hebrew, in the simple future, without our additional word 'when,' *I will find thee without, I will kiss thee, and shall not be despised*. She had before lamented, that when she sought her Beloved, she *found him not*; now she has no such fears, nor feels any anxiety on that score; but, in a well-grounded confidence of finding him whenever she sought him, declares herself ready to avow her love by every becoming expression. The Beloved had complained, by his type David², that 'they who saw him, *behutz*, without, conveyed themselves from him;' similar to the charge against the left-hand company in St Matthew³. The spouse here speaks and acts in a quite contrary strain, *I will find thee, behutz, without, I will kiss thee*—publicly

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¹ Page 151.

² Psalm xxxi. 13.

³ Chap. xxv. 42, 43.

acknowledge, and rejoice in thee as mine*, without fear or risk of being *despised* or censured for being too forward: An example to every private christian, who in the cause of religion should neither be afraid nor ashamed, on any account, openly to profess his love of, and attachment to, Christ, remembering the heavy doom pronounced against such false shame—‘Whosoever shall be *ashamed* of me, and my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh in his glory’, &c.

VER. 2.—*I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother’s house, who would instruct me; I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate.*

Here, as in the former verse, the Hebrew has all in the future, as have Jerom and the LXX. *I will lead, &c.*—Our insertion of ‘who,’ as connecting it with the mother, is not necessary in the natural sense, and gives a very unfavourable turn to the spiritual. Marius Calasio and Jerom make it according to grammar, without the relative, *docebis me, thou wilt teach me*, an office more proper to, and more efficacious from, the Beloved, than can be said of the mother. [The rest of this verse has been already considered³, as have also the next two verses.]

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VER.

* ‘Kiss the Son,’ Psalm ix. 12.

² St Luke ix. 26.

³ On ch. iii. 4. and v. 1.

VER. 3.—*His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me.*

VER. 4.—*I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.*

Only upon this last verse, I would now observe, that this is the third time we meet with this solemn charge, and always after having found and met with her Beloved. And as I own myself so much an admirer of this Song of Songs, as to believe every, the most minute, circumstance about it to have a particular design, I would fain think, that this observation, trivial as some may think it, will at least be of use to justify the spiritual application I have made of this adjuration, when it first occurred in a fuller form.

VER. 5.—(*Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved*)? *I raised thee up under the apple-tree; there thy mother brought thee forth, there she brought thee forth that bare thee.*

The first part of this verse, which our Bibles inclose in a parenthesis, is evidently a rapturous exclamation without any necessary connexion, and as it manifestly indicates a change of the speaker, we may take it as a beautiful stroke of the Poet's own pen, describing, as in vision, the spouse in a most delightful attitude, like the exhibition he had given of the Beloved in the 3d chapter—*Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness, &c. leaning on her*

her Beloved? The word for *leaning* is another of the words in this Song, which are not found anywhere else; but by its position here, especially with the preposition *ol*, ‘upon,’ can have no other meaning but what the versions have given it, of leaning upon, guided and supported by her Beloved, in her weary journey through the wilderness of this world: Or rather, as this, though certainly true, does not answer the *full* force of the verb, *oleh*, ‘cometh up,’ we must extend it to another event, where the Beloved’s support must be had, and is in fact promised—that full and final coming up from the wilderness of the grave, the land of silence, where all things are forgotten, not only at the call of the Beloved, ‘Come ye blessed,’ &c. but by his very personal assistance—‘I will come again, and, *παραληψομαι υμας*, will take you to myself.’ This gracious promise, thus particularly expressed, when contemplated in all its extent, would do much to satisfy the pious mind, as to a question which, I dare say, is often started, How, or in what way, the saints shall, or can go to heaven at last? ‘Going to heaven,’ is a familiar way of speaking; and its being so familiar, I suspect, weakens the importance of what it means. No thought can be more awful, no curiosity more commendable: And this curiosity the Beloved has, I think, abundantly gratified by the above declaration, ‘I will take you ‘to myself,’ into his arms, as it were, into that vast expanse of LIGHT which his glorified humanity will then have concentrated in itself; and which, by its

inherent quality, which we now call electricity', will, we may suppose, be powerful enough to lift, support, carry, the blessed millions, into the several mansions prepared for them. And thus will be literally, in a manner, answered our Poet's visionary question, *Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness*, (the terminus a quo), and *goeth up to heaven* (the terminus ad quem), *leaning upon her Beloved?* The other clause of the verse is neither so easy, nor so delightful. *I raised thee up under the apple-tree; there thy mother brought thee forth; and then follows, as we read, a kind of tautology unworthy of a Solomon's pen, she that bare thee brought thee forth.* The adherers to the literal sense have seen the impropriety of women of quality bearing their children under trees, and have therefore adopted another of the senses of the root *habl*, *habl*, 'to pledge,' 'thy mother pledged thee unto me,' which is an addition to the text necessary for their scheme. Jerom has given a rendering which conveys a distinct enough idea, 'Sub arbore malo suscitavi te, ibi corrupta est mater tua, ibi violata est genitrix tua—Under the apple-tree I have raised thee up; there thy mother was corrupted, there she that bare thee was violated.' Corrupting is a very frequent sense of *habl*, and our poet has used it accordingly, where he says*, 'the little foxes, *mehablim*, that spoil the vines, which the LXX. and Jerom have

* Compare St Luke viii. 46. 'Virtue, *δυναμις*, power is gone out of me.'

² Chap. ii. 15.

have rendered in the same way. But there is an objection to Jerom's translation, especially in the first part, 'thy mother was corrupted,' that it is not consistent with grammatical construction, which cannot admit this passive sense to be put upon the original *hablika amka*. However, it can very well bear an active sense, 'thy mother corrupted thee;' and the second clause may stand, as Jerom makes it, *ild-tika hble*, 'was corrupted.' This rendering by Jerom, therefore, (which belongs as much to the word *habl* as 'pledging' does, and much more so than our 'bringing forth,' for which it is never used but here), presents to our minds a double view of humiliation and comfort, and carries us back to the early period of human nature, corrupted in the person, and by the fault of, the original mother, from a tree, which she imagined was capable to inspire wisdom ², till the Beloved was pleased to raise her up, and restore her, and us in her, to the full enjoyment of his love and favour: And this short sketch of Solomon's may pass for a miniature picture of the same figure, which was afterwards drawn on a larger scale, and with stronger colourings, by the prophet Ezekiel ³. The design is the same in both, and so must also the interpretation be, however mortifying to the proud conceits of carnal reason.

VER.

² Like Job's *rubi hble*, 'my breath is corrupt,' Job xvii. 1.

³ Gen. iii. 6.

³ Chap. xvi. 3—15.

VER. 6.—*Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm.*

This is a prayer from the spouse to her Beloved, from the church to Christ, of strong emphasis, and most extensive signification. We have two texts that serve to shew this extent; one is in Haggai', 'I will take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, and will make thee as a *signet*, (*huthm*, 'seal'), for 'I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts.' The other text is in Jeremiah', 'As I live, saith the Lord, though Coniah were the *signet* upon my 'right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence.' These two places set over against one another, the one implying a high privilege, the other a most terrible degradation, will give us a sufficient idea of what it is that the church here prays for: and that idea will be heightened by the fervency of the repetition, and that too in different terms. *As a seal upon thine heart*—the seat of inward love and affection, in the first place; *as a seal upon thine arm*—the outward demonstration of power, 'thy mighty 'stretched out arm,' so frequently occurring thro' the whole of the Old Testament. Well may the church exult in this dignified situation. But let her take warning from Coniah, and compare the sentence against him with the apostle's declaration', 'The just man shall live by faith, but if ' he

¹ Chap. ii. 23.

² Chap. xxii. 24.

³ Heb. x. 38.

‘ he draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in
‘ him.’

VER. 6.— *Love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave; the coals are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.*

VER. 7.— *Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it; if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.*

Here we have, from the spouse's mouth, a most admirably expressive panegyric upon *Love*, quite beautiful and just on the literal, but much more so on the spiritual, plan. *Love is strong as death*, can conquer that king of terrors. ‘ Peradventure,’ says the apostle, ‘ for a good man some would even dare to die.’ And a greater than the apostle hath said, ‘ Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.’ But all description, or commendation of love, is absorbed in the Beloved disciple's three words, ‘ God is love.’ *Jealousy is cruel as the grave*. Experimentally true, in the literal sense, to the miserable sufferers under it. Spiritually, it is predicated of God, *Al qna*, ‘ a jealous God’, and of Christ⁵,
‘ the

⁴ Rom. vii. 7.

² St John xv. 13.

³ 1 St. John iv. 8. 16.

⁴ Deut. vi. 9, &c.

⁵ Psalm lxxix. 9. as applied St John ii. 17.

‘the zeal, *gnath*, of thy house hath eaten me up.’ It is metaphorically applied by St Paul to himself, ‘I am jealous over you with godly jealousy, (*Θεῦ ζηλω*, ‘jealousy of God), for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ;’ exactly on the plan, and in the terms of our Song. The jealousy, *quach*, here characterized by the spouse, if spoken of herself, will raise a difficulty as to what she could intend by it. Could she, as she stood, in the common acceptation, be jealous of her Beloved? To this question, so natural, and consequential, I have no scruple to answer, that, though she might not be afraid of his forsaking her, or casting her off, yet she both might be, and in fact was, *jealous* of a rival in his affections. The spouse in the Song primarily represents the *then* church, or, in modern style, the Jewish church; and it is well known how proud they were of their privileges, and how jealous of any communication of them to others. Of this, we have an early instance in the history of Jacob, when taken in a *typical* view; and if not in that view, I do not see what great concern *we* now-a-days have with it. Jacob had two wives, sisters, Leah and Rachel; Rachel, the youngest, was his favourite, but was long barren ¹. And after Leah had born him four sons, we are told ², that ‘Rachel envied her sister, (*קנא*, *teqna*, *ἐζηλωσε*, LXX. ‘was jealous),

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 2.² Gen. xxix. 31.³ Gen. xxx. 1.

‘jealous), and she said to Jacob. Give me children, ‘or else I die.’ Here was jealousy, as the phrase is, with a witness, coming pretty close up to our present description, *cruel*, (marg. ‘hard,’ σκληρόν, LXX. *dura*, Jerom), and quite analogous to another piece of description from our poet’s pen¹, ‘there are three things, yea four, that are never ‘satisfied, the *grave*, and the *barren* womb,’ &c. This account of the matter, which I think is sufficiently warranted by scripture, will both illustrate, and be illustrated by, two texts of St Paul’s. The one² is a quotation from Moses³, ‘I will provoke ‘them to jealousy by them that are no people.’ The other is an argumentation of his own⁴, ‘But ‘rather through their fall, salvation is come to the ‘Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.’ But there is a part of the description here, which calls for a particular enquiry. *The coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.* Whether this shall be thought to connect with *love* or with *jealousy*, it will be found of strong import, and the *most vehement flame*, which is a paraphrase, not a translation, will correspond to either. The Hebrew is שֵׁלֶבֶתִיָּה, *shelebthieh*, which is generally read in one word, but is visibly by grammar two, *lebth* (in regimine, from *leb*) *Jah*, ‘flame of God, divine ‘flame.’ It would, at first sight indeed, appear to belong to the *jealousy*, being the branch of description

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¹ Prov. xxx. 15, 16.² Rom. x. 19.³ Deut. xxxii. 21.⁴ Rom. xi. 11.

tion nearest to it; and the more so, as we find 'fire and jealousy' joined together for punishment'. 'In the fire of my jealousy, saith the Lord;' which in the next verse he aggravates, 'In my jealousy, and in my fury.' And so likewise the prophet Zephaniah² speaks of 'the fire of God's jealousy.' But as I would fain remove every idea of divine fury from this amiable and enrapturing composition, where the context does not make it absolutely necessary, as in this case it does not, I incline rather to connect this additional clause with the *love strong as death*, raised in the heart by the *lebth Jah*, 'flame of God,' as Junius in Robertson's Lexicon, on the root *leb*, expounds it, 'Which God by the most powerful light of his spirit, kindles up into a perpetual continuance'. And this connexion is confirmed by the beautiful enlargement contained in the seventh verse, *Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it*; manifestly and elegantly alluding to the peculiar quality of water for quenching, and, as we say, drowning out fire. *Many waters*, מים רבים, *mim rabim*, 'great waters,' always used emblematically in a bad sense⁴. Let St Paul apply and explain this,

¹ Ezek. xxxvi. 5.

² Chap. i. 18. iii. 8.

³ See above on ch. iii. 10.

⁴ See, *inter alia*, Psalm xviii. 16. xxxii. 6. 'In the floods (שֹׁפָף, *shathaph*, our word for 'drown') of great waters,' great water floods. Psalm xciii. 4. cxliv. 7, &c. 'Cannot, are not able to quench,' לִכְבוֹת, *lecebutb*,

this, by that triumphant persuasion of his', 'That
 'neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principa-
 'lities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to
 'come, nor heighth, nor depth, nor any other crea-
 'ture, (great waters nor floods), shall be able to se-
 'parate us from the *love* of God, (his love of us, and
 'our love of him), which is in Christ Jesus our
 'Lord.' But this is not all; for so full is our in-
 spired Bard of this enchanting theme, that he can-
 not relinquish it, without putting us in mind, that
 as no enemy can rob us of his love, so it is not in
 our own power to procure it originally to ourselves.
Though a man would give all the substance of his house
for love, it would utterly be contemned. It is indeed,
 even in a natural sense, but a poor love that is pur-
 chased, if such a thing be possible, with money.
 In a spiritual sense, such a purchase is impossible;
 and the foolish attempt would be both *contemned*
 and *rejected*. The *love* which our spouse here
 magnifies so much, is, and must be, the product of
 a divine flame, to resist the attacks made upon it—
 by 'floods and great waters.' 'The fruit of the
 'Spirit is love'; 'Love is of God,' *ex Oes*, 'from
 'God'; 'Christians ought to be rooted and
 'grounded in love—and able to know the love of
 'Christ, which passeth knowledge'. 'There now
 2 U 2 . . . abideth

lecabuth, qburn, LXX. extinguere, Jerom, from the root *cabeb*, always
 and invariably employed in this one sense of extinguishing 'flame,' lite-
 rally and metaphorically.

¹ Rom. viii. 38, 39.

² Gal. v. 22.

³ 1 St John iv. 7.

⁴ Eph. iii. 17, 19.

‘abideth, faith, hope, love, but the greatest of these is love.’

VER. 8.—*We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister, in the day when she shall be spoken for?*

All commentators agree in spiritualizing this passage, and making the *little sister* to signify the Gentile church²; and I shall be told, that this warm expression of affection and care contradicts the application I have made of the *jealousy* in the 6th verse. But this objection, if it shall be made, goes entirely upon a point taken for granted, but not proved, that the expression comes from the spouse, and not from the Beloved, which yet I think is fully as likely, and even more mannerly and respectful to him, than as coming from her: And in this application I find myself warranted from the Beloved’s own mouth³, ‘Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and do something for. *What shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?* or, as Jerom has it, *alloquenda est*, ‘shall be spoken to?’ The question is proper enough from him, and nothing is more usual than for the questioner, in such cases, to give the answer—‘What could have been done

² 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

³ See it touched at above, on chap. i. 13.

³ St John x. 16.

‘done more to my vineyard?—I will tell you what
‘I will do!’

VER. 9.—*If she be a wall, we will build upon her a
palace of silver; and if she be a door, we will in-
close her with boards of cedar.*

The plural *we*, used on this occasion, can be no bar to putting both these verses into the mouth of the Beloved, when we remember that early in the Poem this plural form was assumed by him², which I then explained and accounted for. That explanation, though not improper, is not necessary here, as the circumstances are not the same. There, the business was to adorn the bride, the then favourite, in which no service of inferior attendants was either required or allowed. Here, it is to provide for, and be beneficial to, *a little sister without breasts*; in which kind work the spouse is here called upon, and we know was employed in fact, to be assistant along with, and under the direction of, the Beloved. ‘Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.’ Ye shall be witnesses unto me—to the uttermost parts of the ‘earth.’ I send thee to the Gentiles, to open ‘their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to ‘light, and from the power of Satan unto God.’

Let

¹ Isaiah v. 4, 5.

² Chap. i. 11.

³ Isaiah ii. 3.

⁴ Acts i. 8.

⁵ Acts xxvi. 17, 18, &c.

Let us now observe how this conjunct work of provision for the *little sister* is expressed, and we shall see ground to admire both the significancy of metaphors quite irreconcilable to the natural sense, and the beautiful propriety of application that is all along kept up.

If she be a wall¹, we will build upon her a palace of silver; we will make thee—‘ studs of silver².’ The word for *palace* is שִׁירָה, *thirt*; and the Lexicons make an affinity, as they call it, betwixt it and the root שָׂר, *thur*, which is translated ‘ordines,’ ‘rows,’ corresponding with the תִּרְיִם, *turim*, ‘rows,’ mentioned in the first chapter³. *We will build.* St Paul says, ‘We are workers together with God—‘I, as a wise architect, have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon⁴,’ &c. ‘Christians are said to be built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets⁵,’ &c. *If she be a door, we will inclose her with boards of cedar.* ‘The door of faith opened to the Gentiles⁶,’ ‘A door of utterance opened to speak the mystery of Christ⁷,’ ‘He that entereth not by the door—is a thief⁸,’

The

¹ See on ch. v. 7.

² Chap. i. 11.

³ We read of the four rows of precious stones, Ex. xxviii. 17, 20. and repeated chap. xxxix. 10—13. Compare St John’s Holy Jerusalem lying ‘foursquare,’ with twelve foundations of precious stones, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Rev. xxi. throughout.

⁴ 1 Cor. iii. 9, 10.

⁵ Eph. ii. 20, 22.

⁶ Acts xiv. 27.

⁷ Colos. iv. 3.

⁸ St John x. 1.

The *door* here is to have *boards of cedar*. The word for *boards*, *לוח*, *luhh*, is singular, and always used for the 'tables' of the law, never for boards but here, and only in our translation. In the sense of 'table,' it is taken both literally and metaphorically—'Write them upon the 'table' of thine 'heart';' 'Write it before them in a 'table';' 'Write the vision, and make it plain upon 'tables'. All in allusion to the original writing of the law upon *luhhut*, 'tables,' the first, and for a long time, the only way of writing⁴: and there is nothing either in the language or subject to hinder this idea from being kept up in the passage before us. Inclosing a door with boards, seems to have but little meaning. Jerom's 'compingamus illud, let us 'compact, fitly frame it with cedar tables,' is more expressive, and nearer to the purpose. But the Greek points more directly the same way that I am looking, *διαγραφωμεν επ' αυτην σανιδα κεδρινην*, 'we 'will write upon her a cedar table:' and these 'translators being Jews, seem to have had in their eye the old direction of their great lawgiver⁵, 'Thou shalt *write* these words upon the *door*-posts of 'thy house, and in thy gates.' Allow a Jewish poet to have had the same retrospect; and by joining together these several strokes of scriptural resemblance,

¹ Prov. iii. 3.

² Isaiah xxx. 8.

³ Habak. ii. 2:

⁴ Hence the Latin *tabellarius*, in use to this day for a 'letter carrier.'

⁵ Deut. xi. 20.

blance, though perhaps not easy to be formed into such regular arrangement as the fastidious critic would require, we may have some conception of what is here promised to be done for the *little sister*.

VER. 10. — *I am a wall, and my breasts like towers; then was I in his eyes as one that found favour.*

This joyful declaration is generally put into the spouse's mouth, and under that appropriation has something in it that looks like envying or beholding with jealousy the *little sister*, and robbing her as it were of the blessing intended for her, under the supposition of her being *a wall*. Jerom's version, supposing the speaker here to be the Gentile church, the *little sister*, renders the passage thus, 'Ego murus, et ubera mea sicut turres, ex quo facta sum coram eo quasi pacem reperiens—I am a wall, and my breasts like towers, from the time that I became before him as finding peace.' In this view of the declaration before us, every thing is plain and intelligible; and in what the *little sister* says of herself, there are two beautiful strokes of language which claim notice: *When I was קטנה, quethn, little*, my breasts were so too, indeed almost nothing; now that I am become *a wall*, and have a palace of silver built upon me, they are become big, מגדלות, *megdlut*, from גדל, *gedl*, 'big,' the word always opposed to *quethn*, 'little.' And again, *I am now become* (not, as we read it, 'having

‘ing found favour,’ which is rather a feeble translation, but) *a finder of peace*, (*shalum*, the root of the name *Solomon*), invested in a manner with the title of *Shulamite*, in allusion to what is said of that character in the conclusion of the 6th chapter. The Hebrew language delights, as I have hinted before, in such allusions, which the scoffer will no doubt sneer at, as an idle *lusus verborum*, a play of words. All, however, that is contained in these two verses, as proposed in the one, and realized in the other, will, upon examination, be found to belong to the Gentile church¹, the *little sister*, beautified with full breasts, connected with Solomon, and blest with the heavenly *mahanaim*, as is clearly referred to, and confirmed by the next verse.

VER. 11.—*Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon; he let out the vineyard to keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.*

This is another of those passages which certain writers lay hold of, to countenance their applica-

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tion

¹ Prophesied of—Isaiah xi. 10. ‘To it, the root of Jesse, shall the Gentiles seek.’ Isaiah lx. 3. 5. ‘The Gentiles shall come to thee,’ &c. Their acceptance is foreseen as certain—St John x. 16. ‘Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice.’ ‘The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it,’ Acts xxviii. 28. Declared as fact—‘The gospel which I preach among the Gentiles,’ Galat. ii. 2. ‘Gentiles in times past in the flesh—now in Christ Jesus, for he is our peace,’ Eph. ii. 11, 13, 14. ‘The Gentiles become fellow heirs and of the same body, and partakers of the promise of Christ by the gospel,’ Ephes. iii. 6, &c.

tion of the Song to the marriage of Pharaoh's daughter, from the relation which they fancy *Baal-hamon* must have to Egypt. But this conceit proceeds either from ignorance of, or inattention to, the word here used. The Hammon of the Egyptians, which we are told is the Egyptian name for Jupiter, and constitutes the famous Cyrenaic oracle of Jupiter Hammon, is written *חמון*, with the *heth*, ח, and is derived from their graceless progenitor Ham; from whom Egypt is, by the Greeks, sometimes called *Χαμια*, 'Chamia,' the land of Cham'. The *hamon* of our word is written with the *he*, ה, *hemun*, and is the foundation of that great change in Abraham's name made by God himself*, 'Thy name shall no more be called *אברם*, *Abrm*, but thy name shall be *אברהם*, *Abrem*; for a father of *חמון גוים*, *hemun guim*, many nations, multitude of nations, I have made thee.' Accordingly Jerom's version looks this way, 'Vinea fuit pacifica' (alluding to the 'pacem reperiens' before) in ea 'quæ habet populos—' The peace-giver had a vineyard, in that which has peoples;' but in conformity to the text of Genesis, which he seems to have had in his eye, more properly, and as he there renders it, *gentes*, 'nations.' There is a material distinction in scripture-style between these two terms; the faithful are honoured with the peculiar title of God's *עם*, *om*, people; the unconverted

* Psalm lxxviii. 51. *חמון*, LXX.

² Gen. xvii. 5.

ed are always called גוֹי, *gum*, 'nations, εθνη, Gr. from which we have the word 'heathen,' gentes, Latin, whence our 'Gentiles,' so frequent in our translation. It is in this distinguishing sense, that the promise above quoted is to be taken; for the peculiarity of the *berith*, the redeeming covenant, was even then fixed in Isaac¹, 'In Isaac shall thy seed be called.' In fulfilment of this promise, we know that nations, Gentiles, came out of Abraham's loins, not only through Ishmael and his twelve princes², but also through the six sons which he had by his second wife Keturah³. Of this vast, *hemun*, multitude, and indeed of the universal *hemun* of all nations, the Beloved, in terms of the 'eternal covenant⁴,' and by virtue of his early title of 'the seed of the woman⁵,' was the true original, בַּאֵל, *Baal*, Lord-husband, as the word, especially in prophetic language, signifies; though, in process of time, the *gum*, Gentiles, went a-whoring from him, and set up בַּעֲלִים, *Baalim*, of their own; and even many times drew off his chosen, dear spouse, into the same provoking, and, in her, most uncharacteristic apostasy. Yet still he was the 'Lord of a vineyard⁶,' such as it was, among them, and had it always in contemplation, in his own time and way, to bring them back, and be once more the

2 x 2

only

¹ Ver 21. and renewed chap. xxi. 12.

² Gen. xvii. 20.

³ Chap. xxv. 2.

⁴ Heb. xiii. 20.

⁵ Gen. iii. 15.

⁶ St Matth. xxi. 40.

only *Baal* of the great *Hemun* of them. This must be the real, indeed the only meaning of our *Baal-hamon*. We find no city or place, under this name, nor the word itself anywhere else in all the Bible : So it may be considered, like several others in this Song, as a word of the Poet's own fabrication, to express what he intended in the emblematic style, which he had all along adopted. And in this sense it will be found applicable to the character of the *little sister* ; *little*, by the account here given, not in stature or quantity, but in quality and esteem, for want of the 'magnifying' privileges of the spouse, being, as her apostle, St Paul, describes her', 'Without Christ, aliens from 'the commonwealth or polity of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no 'hope, and without God in the world.' 'He 'let out the vineyard to keepers ; every one, for 'the fruit thereof, was to bring ('brings,' says Jerom, 'will bring,' say the Hebrew and LXX.) 'a thousand pieces of silver. Let us turn to our Lord's parable of the servants*, and we shall find a sufficient analogy between it, and the description before us, to elucidate the general purport of both, upon making proper allowance for the parabolical strain of the one, and the emblematical design of the other.

VER.

* Eph. ii. 12.

* St Matth. xxv. 14—23.

VER. 12.—*My vineyard, which is mine, is before me :
Thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and they
that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.*

This is consistently enough put into the mouth of the spouse ; and we find her, so early as in the 1st chapter of the Song, entering on the subject of her vineyard, which I then explained, and may now refer to that explanation, only with this difference, which is indeed a material one, that she then lamented the neglected state of her vineyard ; but now, upon being ‘ brought into the king’s chambers,’ and strengthened by repeated indications of his enlivening love, she speaks of it in high strains of delight, as producing fruit, to the satisfaction of her Beloved, and of all concerned. *My vineyard,* ^{לפני} *sheli, quæ mihi, which is mine,* as in distinction from the vineyard in *Baal-hamon, is before me,* ^{לפני} *lepni, in my presence,* the dear and daily object of my attention and culture, ‘ filling the face of the ‘ world with fruit ’.’ *Thou, O Solomon, shalt have a thousand* ². ‘ A certain man planted a vineyard, ‘ and let it out to husbandmen—and sent to receive ‘ from them of the fruit of the vineyard ’³ ; which St Paul calls ‘ doing all to the glory of God ’⁴. *They that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.* If this be extended to a general comprehension, we may see the application of it in the parable of the vineyard,

¹ Isaiah xxvii. 6.

² See above, ver. 11.

³ St Mark. xii. 1, 2.

⁴ 1 Cor. x. 31.

yard', 'Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.' But if it is to be restricted, as there is more reason to think it is, to the particular class of 'keepers, watchmen, or overseers,' it may be explained by the apostolic provision for the ministers of religion, 'that they who serve at the altar should live by the altar'.¹ or by our Saviour's expressive declaration², 'He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that soweth³, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together.' Which spiritualizing declaration St Paul extends to all ranks and classes of faithful labourers, without distinction⁴, 'Become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.' Let us attend too, as no circumstance from which instruction may be drawn should escape us, to the proportion stated here, between the Beloved's share of the fruits of the vineyard, and that allotted to the keepers—*To Solomon, a thousand; to the keepers, two hundred among them.* In all our labours therefore, whether as appointed keepers, or individual labourers, and in all the fruits that may result from these labours, let the *Beloved* have by far the largest share, as of necessary and effective operation, so likewise of most justly deserved, glory, honour, and praise!

VER.

¹ St Matth. xx.

² 1 Cor. ix. 7—14. repeated Gal. vi. 6. and 1 Tim. v. 17.

³ St John iv. 36.

⁴ See St Luke viii. 5. expounded ver. 11.

⁵ Rom. vi. 22.

VER. 13.—*Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice : cause me to hear it.*

This, whether request or injunction, by the feminine termination of the participle *היִשְׁכַּת*, *haishbth*, *quæ habitas*, is clearly directed to the spouse, but from what quarter is not so evident. The bringing in the *companions*, mentioned above¹, creates a difficulty in any view. It may indeed, for aught material that can be adduced to the contrary, have been put by the Poet into the *little sister's* mouth ; and in that light may pass for a request, in plain terms, thus, ‘Thou who, though once in danger of wandering in uncertain paths, and *turning aside by the flocks of the companions*, art now happily settled in a secure residence of delight and instruction, under the eye of thy Beloved, since the companions (good or bad) have had the opportunity of hearkening to thy voice, extend the same favour to me, and make me likewise to hear it.’ ‘Have they not heard ? says St Paul², ‘yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.’ Or, if we must go along with the current of interpretation, and assign this verse to the Beloved, it will then appear an injunction, blended, as is his usual way, with a gentle touch of tacit reproof for former deviations, and a call upon the spouse *now*, in her present state

¹ Chap. i. 7. and there explained.

² Rom. x. 18.

state of intimate connexion with him, to forsake and turn away from all companions, and direct her voice (neither to saints nor angels, but) to HIM, and to HIM only. ‘*Let me hear thy voice, וְשִׁמְעֵנִי, hashmioni,*’ the same word used before, where it is said, *Let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice*¹. Either one or other of these different, but not contrary, senses, must be the meaning here, and may be improved and enlarged upon without further explication.

VER. 14.—*Make haste, my Beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountains of spices.*

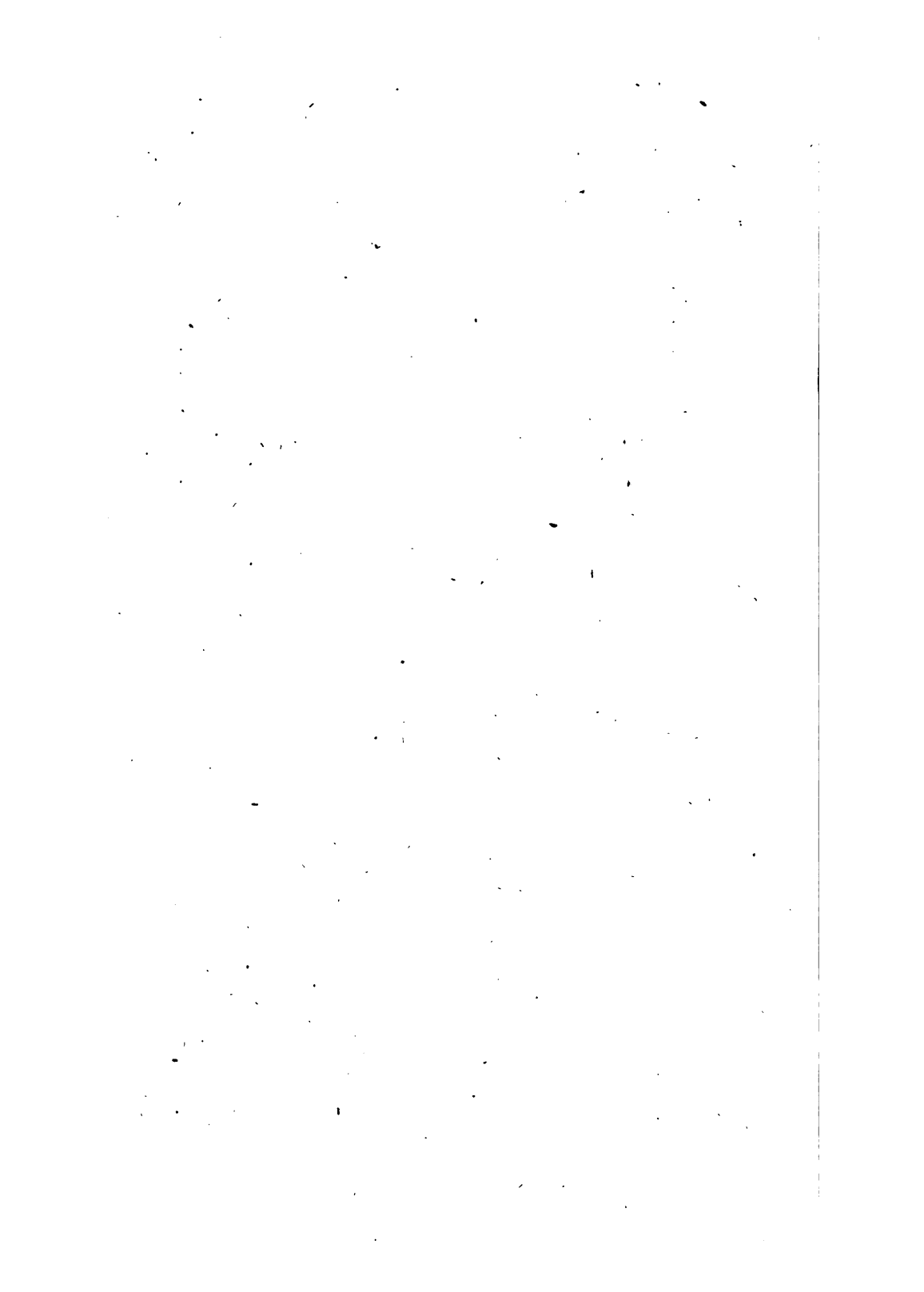
This concluding address is similar to, and much in the same language with, one that we had met with before²; only, that *the mountains* there were called *mountains of Bether*, ‘division,’ here they are of *spices*, בְּשִׁמִּים, *beshmim*, ἀρώματα, some aromatic substance that was a chief ingredient in the holy anointing oil³, much used in an emblematical sense; and which, having been already described in my remarks on the word *Bether*, does not seem to require any farther illustration. I cannot conclude, however, without taking notice of an observation made by the Paraphraser, whose criticisms I have so often had occasion to bring into view—
‘The latter part of this chapter, from the 8th verse,’
he

¹ Chap. ii. 14.

² Chap. ii. 17.

³ Exod. xxx. 23—25.

he says, ' is the most difficult part of the Poem, as ' to the literal sense, for, as to the typical, it is plain ' enough.' Now, if this part be typical, why not the whole? And if the typical sense be plainer here than the literal, may it not be so through the rest of the piece? In that case, why have so much pains been taken, such a shew of learning displayed about the literal, to the neglect of the typical? Indeed, there are many parts of the Bible-history which equally require a knowledge of the typical sense to explain and reconcile them; and it is from the neglect of this, and looking only at the literal sense, that all the idle sneers and cavils against it are drawn. God forgive the fools, and open their eyes!



PSALMI

TRES ELEGIAE REDDITI.

PSALMUS VIII.

Ó DEUS! O læto DOMINUM quem corde fatemur!
Quam pulchrum est toto NOMEN in orbe tuum!
Tu supra immensi convexa palatia cœli
Splendorem lucis spargis ubique tuæ.
Ex ore infantum, et præbent quibus ubera matres
Cantica solenni laude referta paras:
Sic inimica mali molimina diruis hostis,
Impiaque ultoris probra silere facis.
Cum specto expansos divino robore cœlos
Lunamque, et digitis sidera structa tuis,
O! quid Homo, quem Tu tanto dignaris amore!
Filius aut Hominis, quod memor ejus eris!
Quem paullo Angelicâ fecisti gente minorem,
Gloriæ in excelsis culmen adusque levas:

Illum Tu mundo Dominum, mundique colonis,
 Præficias, atque Homini cuncta subesse jubes,
 Et pecudes agri, stabulisque armenta, ferasque
 Sylvarum turmas, Oceanique greges ;
 Quicquid per terras movet, aut secatur æthera pennis,
 Aut cava piscosi permeat antra maris.
 O DEUS ! O læto DOMINUM quem corde fatemur,
 Quam pulchrum est toto NOMEN in orbe tuum

PSALMUS XXIII.

MUNERA PASTORIS mihi Tu, DEUS, omnia supplies ;
 Nil unquam curâ dives egebo Tuâ.
 Florida me recubare facis per prata quietum,
 Adque salutiferas ducis amicus aquas :
 NOMINIS ergo Tui, mihi flectis ad optima mentem,
 Meque in justitiæ callibus ire doces.
 Per fuscæ umbrosam mortis licet ambulo vallem,
 Non hostis metuum lurida tela mali.
 Tu mecum es semper, semper mihi providus adstas :
 Sustinent sceptrum me, baculusque tuus :

Fœ-

Fœcundam mihi Tu mensam, Deus alme, parâsti,
 Invideat quamvis gens inimica mihi.
 Tu mihi cœlesti lætum caput ungis oliva,
 Exundatque mihi mystica vina calix.
 Me bonitas et amor serum comitantur in ævum,
 Perque futura DEI sæcla habitabo domum !

PSALMUS XLV.

MATERIAM mihi cor grandem eructare laborat,
 Grande laboranti, mi DEUS, adfer opem !
 Lingua mihi prompti calamum scriptoris adæquat,
 Quæ REGEM spectant mystica sacra cano.
 ‘ Pulchrior en cunctis Tu quos procreavit Adamus,
 ‘ Cœlitus in labiis gratia fusa tuis :
 ‘ Te Deus æterno Regem benedixit amore,
 ‘ Sanctorum voluit Te Deus esse Ducem :
 ‘ Cinge tuum femori metuendæ cuspidis ense,
 ‘ O ! qui divîno robore cuncta potes !
 ‘ Macte esto virtute tuâ, per nuncia veri
 ‘ Verba equita mitis, justitiamque ferens :

‘ Te

- ‘ Te tua dextra cito multa atque tremenda docebit,
- ‘ Tu qui te doceant non aliunde petis,
- ‘ Dumque inimica tuæ penetrant ad corda sagittæ,
- ‘ Submissum flectet plebs Tibi sancta genu :
- ‘ Est Solium, DEUS O ! Tibi secla per ultima durans,
- ‘ Regni virga tui juris honore viret ;
- ‘ Justitiam Tu totus amas, rectumque, fidemque,
- ‘ Tu fronte iratâ despicias omne nefas :
- ‘ Quippe DEUS, tuus ipse DEUS, lætantis olivæ
- ‘ Te supra socios unxit odore sacro ;
- ‘ Myrrhâ, aloëque super vestem, casiâque refusis,
- ‘ Exhilarat vultum pyxis eburna tuum :
- ‘ Inter honoratas casto Tibi amore puellas
- ‘ Et natæ Regum, splendida turma, micant :
- ‘ Ad dextram stat sponsa tuam, prælustri in auro,
- ‘ Quod de longinquo littore mittit Ophir.
- ‘ At Tu, præ reliquis Regi lectissima Virgo,
- ‘ Ausculta, atque animo percipe cuncta pio.
- ‘ Tu patriam, patrisque domum, populosque relinque,
- ‘ Nec pete quæ fuerant antea chara tibi.
- ‘ Sic formam Rex ille tui mirabitur oris,
- ‘ Hunc tibi nunc Dominum tu reverenter ama.
- ‘ En tibi ferre Tyri festinat filia donum,
- ‘ Festinant Satrapæ munera ferre tibi.
- ‘ Pulchra intus Regis nata est, quam extrinsecus
- ‘ ornat,
- ‘ Aurata et vario sparsa colore toga :

‘ Ad

* Ad Regem in Phrygio fulgens ducetur amictu,
 * Virginibus veniet undique cincta suis.
* Solenni in plausu venient, cantuque decoro,
 * Intrabit gaudens regia tecta chorus :
* Pro patribus natos, lætissima Mater, habebis,
 * Queis passim in terris sceptrā verenda dabis.
Ergo Tuum faciam memorari in secula Nomen,
 Et TE laudabit sera propago DEUM !

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 Mr William Wedderburn, Balliol College, Oxford.
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Archibald Young, Esq. Banff.
 Mr John Young, bookseller, Inverness.
 Mr Robert Youngson, Achleuchries, Cruden.

ERRATA.

VOL. I.

- Page cxv. l. 13. for *blandire* read *blandiri*.
 cxvi. l. 3. before *admodum* insert *me*.
 ibid. l. 6. after *necessariæ* insert *sint*.
 cxvii. l. 3. from bottom, after *in* insert *eo*.
 cxix. l. 13. for *Charissime* read *Clarissime*.
 ibid. l. 4 from bottom, for *formosissimam* read *formosissimam*.
 cxxi. l. 17. for *dabant* read *dabunt*.
 cxxii. l. 24. for *lanianam* read *lanienam*.
 cxxiii. l. 12. for *contrariam* read *contrarium*.
 cxxv. l. 8. for *ora* read *ore*.
 cxl. l. 5. for *first* read *sixt*.
 cxlii. l. 21. *unncumbered* read *unencumbered*.
 cxcvii. at foot of the page, for 1800 read 1806.
 14. l. 10. for טו read טז.
 69. l. 22. before *work* insert *a*.
 102. l. 6. dele *the*.
 112. l. 4. for διαλογε read δια λογε.
 192. l. 1. at the end insert *by*.
 196. l. 5. for *Trinit* read *Trinity*.
 248. l. 19. in some copies, instead of מאלהי read מאלהים.
 323. l. 12. for *Cerinthians* read *Corinthians*.

VOL. II.

- Page 29. l. 22. for ישכך read ישכן.
 57. in four places, for p read כ.
 69. l. 21. for כרובים read כרובים.
 126. in the Prooemium, l. 6. for *filio* read *filia*.
 177. l. 7. for *brew* read *Hebrew*.
 215. l. 10. for מדימח read מדימד.
 219. l. 23. for צץ read צץ.
 234. l. 11. for צבא השמים read צבא השמים.
 245. l. 19. dele the *semicolon* after the word *Evangelist*.
 265. l. 25. for *explain* read *explained*.
 287. for *unto* read *into*.

- Page 303. l. 17. for *calls* read *cell*.
 334. l. 12. for דושש read דוששי.
 358. l. 25. for רעש read שער.
 386. l. 17. for חממנה read חממנה.
 ibid. l. 18. for *neph* read *neph*.
 415. l. 14. for *whether* read *whither*.
 416. l. 13. for *trephun* read *trephun*.
 426. l. 18. for *whale* read *bole*.
 437. l. 26. before v. 13. insert Ps. cxxxix.
 ibid. for קשקש read קשקש.
 487. l. 24. for עננ read עננ.